

# THE BYZANTINE ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN TRADE SYSTEM; THIRTEENTH-FIFTEENTH CENTURIES\*

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FROM the beginning of its existence and until the Fourth Crusade, the Byzantine Empire had been characterized by the existence of an economy of exchange that was more or less active. Compared to Western Europe, it was a state with a great amount of visible wealth, with a monetized economy, with a currency which has been called "the dollar of the Middle Ages," and with cities which had a true economic life. In this society, merchants were present and active, although they have become only dimly visible in the uninterested surviving sources; their activities were closely directed by a protectionist state. Even in the Comnenian period, at a time when Italian merchants began to acquire trade privileges in the Byzantine lands, the exchange economy of the Empire flourished; Constantinople, Thessalonica, and other cities continued to function as major trading centers; and the Byzantine merchant may have even profited from the increased economic activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> Constantinople, the great economic and political center of the Empire, was still very impressive as the participants of the Fourth Crusade saw it from their ships in late June 1203: "Or poez savoir que mult esgarderent Costantinople cil qui onques mais ne l'avoient veüe; que il ne pooient mie cuidier que si riche ville peüst estre en tot le monde, cum il virent ces halz murs et ces riches tours, dont ele ere close tot entor a la reonde, et ces riches palais, et ces haltes yglises, dont il i avoit tant que nuls nel poïst croire se il ne le veïst a l'oïl, et le lonc et le lé de la ville, qui de totes les autres ere souverains. Et sachiez que il n'i ot si hardi cui la car ne fremist; et ce ne fu mie mervolle, que onques si grants affaires ne fu empris de tant de gent puis que li monz fu estores."<sup>2</sup>

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Two important studies appeared after this article had been accepted for publication. M. Balard's *La Romanie génoise* (Rome-Genoa, 1978), although essential for the study of Genoese trade in the Levant, does not touch on my subject, except tangentially. N. Oikonomides' monograph, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins en Constantinople (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Montreal, 1979), is a parallel contribution to the history of Constantinople and of Constantinopolitan trade in this period, and therefore important for the problems discussed in this article.

<sup>1</sup> M. F. Hendy, "Byzantium, 1081-1204; An Economic Reappraisal," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 20 (1970), 31-52.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. E. Faral, I (Paris, 1938), ch. 128, p. 130: "I can assure you that all those who had never seen Constantinople before gazed very intently at the city, having never imagined there could be so fine a place in all the world. They noted the high walls and

The results of that enterprise, the fall of Constantinople and parts of the Empire to Westerners in 1204, created novel political and economic conditions in the Eastern Mediterranean, conditions which were only partly altered by the Byzantine recapture of Constantinople in 1261. As far as the Byzantine Empire was concerned, the fall of the City meant the beginning of a new phase in Byzantine relations with Western Europe. Until then, these relations had been increasingly close, but they may be said to have been primarily political and diplomatic, and frequently undertaken at the initiative of the Byzantines. After 1204, and until the end of the Byzantine state's independent existence in 1453, diplomacy formed only one, and that not the most important, area in Byzantine relations with Western Europe. More significant is the presence of Westerners on soil which was or had recently been Byzantine. Before 1204, this presence had been sporadic and more or less controlled by the Byzantine state. After 1204, there were areas which were taken over by Westerners—the French, the Venetians, later the Genoese and the Catalans—and which never returned to Byzantine control. Westerners settled there—in most of the islands, parts of the Morea, parts of Greece—in significant numbers. They formed political entities with which the Byzantines had to fight or deal. Relations with Western powers, both those on Byzantine soil and those in Europe, now became paramount in Byzantine foreign policy, at least until the middle of the fourteenth century when the Ottomans became a primary power. As for the internal history of the Byzantine territories, I suggest that that also was profoundly influenced by the presence of Westerners both within the areas under Byzantine control (such as the Venetians and Genoese in Constantinople and other cities) and outside the frontiers of the state.

The interaction of the Byzantine state, the Western European states, and the Western settlers on Byzantine soil is evident at several levels. At the dynastic level, there is the fact that Byzantine emperors sought their brides in the West: six out of ten emperors of the last dynasty married Western princesses or commoners; and these ladies brought with them Western retinues, ideas, and customs. At the political level, there were constant negotiations between Byzantium and the West on requests for crusades, efforts to avert crusades, and discussions of church union.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in the formation of social and economic institutions in the Byzantine, Venetian, and Frankish-held countryside, one may discern parallel developments in the case of the aristocracy and close interconnections in the case of the agricultural population.<sup>4</sup>

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the lofty towers circling it, and its rich palaces and tall churches, of which there were so many that no one would have believed it to be true if he had not seen it with his own eyes and viewed the length and breadth of that city which reigns supreme over all others. There was indeed no man so brave and daring that his flesh did not shudder at the sight. Nor was this to be wondered at, for never before had so grand an enterprise been carried out by any people since the creation of the world."

<sup>3</sup> The latest works on the subject are K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204–1571*, I (Philadelphia, 1976); and J. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198–1400* (New Brunswick, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> On the aristocracy, see G. Ostrogorsky, "Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *DOP*, 25 (1971), 1–32; and A. E. Laiou, "The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan Period: A Story of Arrested Development," *Viator*, 4 (1973), 131–51. On the rural institutions of the occupied Byzantine lands, see D. Jacoby, "The Encounter of Two Societies: Western Conquerors and Byzantines in the Peloponnese after the Fourth Crusade," *AHR*, 78 (1973), 873–906; *idem*, *La féodalité en Grèce médiévale. Les "Assises de Romanie": sources, application et diffusion* (Paris, 1971); *idem*, "Les états latins en Romanie: phénomènes

Indeed, it is clearly too simplistic to speak of Western influences on Byzantium after 1204. In some areas, and primarily in its economic life, the Byzantine Empire was very much dependent on the West. This fact is strikingly obvious after the 1320's. Byzantium became a hinterland to Italian-dominated markets, and its economy cannot be discussed except in connection with the activities of Italian merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In the Palaeologan period, and most clearly until the late fourteenth century when political factors—primarily the Ottoman conquests—began to interfere heavily with economic ones, the Eastern Mediterranean formed an economic unit within which goods circulated according to specific patterns. The area consisted of Greece, the Aegean and Ionian islands, Crete, Constantinople and the Black Sea area, and Asia Minor; Alexandria, Syria, Cyprus, and Cilicia also formed part of this unit. Economically, the Eastern Mediterranean was important to the West both for its exports and for its imports. Many important products were exported to Western Europe: grain, oil, fruit, animal products, and sugar from Cyprus were sent to Italy and were sometimes reexported to the rest of Europe. As a food exporter, this area was of great significance to specific parts of Europe, primarily to Venice.<sup>5</sup> Not only food, but men (slaves) and raw materials found their way to Western Europe: cotton, linen, silk, wax, alum, lead from Cyprus, wool from Crete, and acorns for the tanneries.<sup>6</sup> This area was also an importer of some European industrial products. The primary import was cloth of all kinds: Lombard and Flemish cloth, velvets, fine cotton cloth. Metalwork and arms were also exported from the West to the Eastern Mediterranean and even to Egypt, despite papal prohibitions. Soap was an important Venetian export.<sup>7</sup> Venetian residents in the colonies of the Eastern Mediterranean seem to have imported many of their necessities from the mother country: in the fourteenth century, a merchant in Crete with ties both in Venice and in Alexandria ordered soap and cloth for his family from

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sociaux et économiques," *15th International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Athens, 1976, Rapports*, I; P. Topping, "Coexistence of Greeks and Latins in Frankish Morea and Venetian Crete," *15th International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Athens, 1976; Rapports*, I; *idem*, *Feudal Institutions as Revealed in the Assizes of Romania, the Law Code of Frankish Greece* (London, 1949); J. Longnon and P. Topping, *Documents sur le régime des terres dans la principauté de Morée au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1969).

<sup>5</sup> The best general work on the subject continues to be W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge*, I and II (Leipzig, 1923). On the grain policy of Italian cities, see H. C. Peyer, *Zur Getreide Politik oberitalienischer Städte in 13. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1950). For some of these products, see F. Thiriet, *Délibérations des assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Roumanie*, I (Paris, 1966), nos. 529 (1346), 368 (1317, Cretan wine re-exported to Flanders); II (Paris, 1971), nos. 729 (1364), 866 (1384); R. Cessi and P. Sambin, *Le deliberazioni del Consiglio dei Rogati (Senato), serie "mixtorum," I* (Venice, 1960), XV, 356; R. Morozzo della Rocca, *Lettere di mercanti a Pigniol Zucchiello (1336-1350)*, Fonti per la storia di Venezia (Venice, 1957), no. 1 (1336). Cf. F. Thiriet, *La Roumanie vénitienne au moyen âge* (Paris, 1975), 303-18; E. Zachariadou, "Sept traités inédits entre Venise et les émirats d'Aydin et de Menteşé (1331-1407)," *Studi Ottomani e pre-Ottomani* (Naples, 1976), 229-40; M. Abrate, "Creta—Colonia veneziana nei secoli XIII-XV," *Economia e Storia*, 3 (1957), 251-77. For Genoa, see J. Heers, *Gênes au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, activité économique et problèmes sociaux* (Paris, 1961), 340-44.

<sup>6</sup> J. Heers, "Il commercio nel Mediterraneo alla fine del secolo XIV e nei primi anni del XV," *ASIt*, 113 (1955), 157-209; Thiriet, *Délibérations*, I, no. 529 (1346); Morozzo della Rocca, *op. cit.*, no. 9; Cessi and Sambin, *op. cit.*, XVI, 358.

<sup>7</sup> *Il Libro dei Conti di Giacomo Badoer (Costantinopoli 1436-1440)*, ed. U. Dorini and T. Bertelé, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Venice, 1956), 240; Thiriet, *Roumanie*, 340.

Venice; even for a lock and keys he did not trust the local Cretan blacksmiths and ordered these items from home.<sup>8</sup>

The Eastern Mediterranean also played another, and better known, economic role. This was a transit area, through which the merchandise of the East and Far East made its way to Europe. Lesser Armenia, Syria, and Alexandria were major outlets throughout this period, particularly after the late fourteenth century; their importance varied with political circumstances. Crete, Constantinople, and Tana for Venice and Pera and Caffa for Genoa were important outlets for the eastern trade.<sup>9</sup>

In its function as an import-export market, the Eastern Mediterranean in this period exhibits some of the characteristics of an international market. The term does not simply designate an area in which exchange takes place on an international level. An international market is an allocation device. It is characterized by the functioning of a supply and demand mechanism that results in a fairly uniform price formation, after the costs of transportation have been eliminated; by the existence of widely accepted or easily convertible currency, and therefore by the existence of banking; as well as by the existence of efficient techniques of acquiring and disseminating economic information. It is, finally and fundamentally, linked to division of labor. Many of these factors may be seen to exist in the Eastern Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages, although never in such strength as to result in a *modern* market economy.<sup>10</sup>

Of the conditions that characterize an international market system, some were more obviously present than others. Currency was, indeed, easily convertible, and bankers and money changers existed in large numbers throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. Traders' manuals give detailed information about the prevalence of some currencies in particular areas and about the rates of conversion.<sup>11</sup> Currency transactions were so easy that it was possible to utilize the rate of exchange in loan transactions in order to conceal usurious interest rates. Market information was readily available, at least to the Italian merchants, and the traders were sufficiently well trained to take advantage of it. There were networks of Venetian and Genoese and later Florentine merchants, bound by family and/or business ties, who worked in cities all over the East: Constantinople, Alexandria, Tana, Caffa, other Black Sea ports, and in Crete.<sup>12</sup> They kept the mother country informed of the availability of

<sup>8</sup> Morozzo della Rocca, *op. cit.*, nos. 15–16.

<sup>9</sup> Heers, "Commercio," *passim*; Heyd, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Morozzo della Rocca, *op. cit.*, especially no. 2. Ibn Battuta, visiting Mali, found that the "Sultan" wore, on festive occasions, a European fabric "called mutanfar" (Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, trans. and ed. H. A. R. Gibb [London, 1929], 324 [chapter XIV]). This was, presumably, after 1353. Here is a partial list of commodities exchanged in Caffa or for which Caffa was a center of transactions: wheat, millet, wine, fish, slaves, skins, silk of Sogdiana, incense, salt, carobs, alum, wax, linseed oil, Lombard cloth, Champagne cloth; see M. Balard, *Gènes et l'Ostre-Mer*, I, *Les Actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289–90* (Paris, 1973), *passim*. On the export trade in Italian and European cloth, cf. H. Laurent, *Un grand commerce d'exportation au Moyen Age. La draperie des Pays-Bas en France et dans les pays méditerranéens (XII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris, 1935), and J. Heers, "Mode, costumes et marchés des draps de laine au Moyen Age," *Annales*, 26 (1971), 1093–1117.

<sup>10</sup> C. Polanyi, C. M. Arensberg, and H. W. Pearson, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (New York, 1957); see esp. the article by W. Neale, "The Market in Theory and History," *ibid.*, 357ff.

<sup>11</sup> The most famous manual is Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge, Mass., 1936). The *hyperpyron* was extensively used in Caffa and the Black Sea area, perhaps as a money of account.

<sup>12</sup> Thiriet, *Délibérations* (*supra*, note 5), I, no. 360 (1316); Morozzo della Rocca, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), *passim*.

merchandise in various parts of this trade complex so that traders could go to one or the other area.<sup>13</sup> A set of documents of the Datini from the late fourteenth-early fifteenth century shows how complete the information network was, since merchants would collect, through their agents, even price information which was not immediately useful but which would alert them to the general market conditions.<sup>14</sup> These are economic institutions which facilitate profits through an adequate manipulation of market conditions. As for the distribution mechanism, it was efficient enough so that it could respond to specific situations. Particular members of the trade complex took measures to make it respond better to their needs. Thus, the Venetian colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean had both their production and their exchange controlled by Venice, as a central clearing mechanism, so that they would serve the needs of the mother country as well as the needs of other colonies. That can be seen, for example, in the export of wheat from Crete not only to Modon and Coron but to the Venetian-held islands of the Aegean.<sup>15</sup> As one scholar has recently put it, the Eastern Mediterranean in the fourteenth century exhibits an amazing economic unity at a time of great political disunity.<sup>16</sup>

The question of price formation, which is of critical importance, cannot, unfortunately, be given a final answer at this stage. It is true that noneconomic factors—such as duties, requisitions, and monopolies imposed by political powers—all were important.<sup>17</sup> The real question is, however, not whether we are dealing with a purely economic price formation, for we manifestly are not, but whether economic factors played a significant role in the formation of prices. Spice prices and other prices do fluctuate with relation to important political events.<sup>18</sup> But there are some indications that underneath, and at “normal” times, there may be an economic price mechanism for primary commodities. Thus, at a time of relative abundance of wheat and of relatively peaceful conditions (late thirteenth century–1340’s) the price of wheat in the Eastern Mediterranean exhibits remarkable stability in time and place.<sup>19</sup> In the late fourteenth century, too, when there is a spell of political quiet, we have a certain uniformity of prices in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup> My argument here is that when political factors do not interfere heavily with existing

<sup>13</sup> F. Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie*, I (Paris, 1958), no. 920 (1936): in view of the bad situation in the Roumania, the order is given to buy and store all available wheat.

<sup>14</sup> Heers, “Commercio” (*supra*, note 6), *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes*, I, nos. 937 (1397), 965 (July 1399); *Nicephori Gregorae byzantina historia*, Bonn ed. (1830) (hereafter Gregoras), II, 686–87. On “Cretan” wheat and the possibility that it was really Asia Minor wheat exported to Venice through Crete, see E. A. Zachariadou, “Prix et marchés des céréales en Roumanie (1343–1405),” *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 61 (1977), 291–306. There are, of course, cases where the sources speak specifically of Cretan wheat: Thiriet, *Régestes*, II, nos. 1550 (1414) and 1786 (1420).

<sup>16</sup> Zachariadou, “Prix et marchés,” 291–92.

<sup>17</sup> J. Day, “Prix agricoles en Méditerranée à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (1382),” *Annales*, 16 (1961), 629–56, especially 635 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Heers, “Commercio,” *passim*, especially 207–9.

<sup>19</sup> Zachariadou, “Prix et marchés,” 292–94. Her argument and evidence concern primarily the stability of wheat prices in Crete in the period ca. 1300–ca. 1340. The usual price then was 16–18 *hyperpyra* per 100 *mouzouria*, which is equivalent to 84.64–95.2 *hyperpyra* per *centenarium*. It may be remembered that the Venetian-Byzantine treaty of 1277 forbade the export of wheat to Venice when its price at Constantinople rose above 100 *hyperpyra* per *centenarium*—a price so close to the one quoted above as to suggest that: a. in normal times—i.e., not periods of scarcity—the price of wheat in Constantinople was somewhat below 100 *hyperpyra* per *centenarium*, and b. this was the general price of wheat in the Roumania in the period 1280–ca. 1340. Cf. A. E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II (1281–1328)* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 16–17.

<sup>20</sup> Day, *op. cit.*, 637 ff.

economic conditions, a type of intrinsic-value mechanism functions, and therefore prices tend to be stable. Finally, it is, perhaps, relevant to add that prices, when influenced by chance or political factors, tend to return to a precrisis level when the crisis is over. Thus, in 1347, a Venetian merchant in Crete reported that the grain of the Romania had dropped from its unusually high price by something like seventy percent because peace had been made with the Mongols in Tana.<sup>21</sup>

As to the question of division of labor, the answer is to some extent evident from the description of the economic function of the Eastern Mediterranean; this is an area whose main exports are food, raw materials, or the reexport of eastern luxury products, while its primary imports are manufactured articles from Western Europe. It may also be self-evident that it was the Western traders, especially the Italians, who ran and dominated this market; for they had the access to the Western markets, they controlled the sea lanes and therefore communications with their ships, they created and controlled the information mechanism, and their needs dictated the currency transactions. Only their influence on price formation is still very much an open question.

Less evident is the effect of these conditions upon the economies and societies of the Eastern Mediterranean. Several questions may be posed. Did these societies participate in the economic situation described? Were their own economies influenced by the activities of the Italian merchants, or did these activities take place at such a level that the fabric of the society of the Eastern Mediterranean countries remained intact? Did the increase in commercial activity result in the creation or expansion of a native merchant class, or did it spell its demise? And what, if any, were the effects on the rural economies of these areas? These questions are of great importance for the history of the Eastern Mediterranean, and of more general historiographical interest. The answers must vary from place to place: the effects, for example, were very different for the Byzantine Empire and for Egypt. As far as the Byzantine Empire is concerned, only some of the questions may be seriously examined, given the present state of research.

The role of the Byzantine economy in the Mediterranean trade complex must be examined first. That Constantinople was and continued to function as an important center of the transit trade of luxury merchandise is certain. As late as the mid- or late fourteenth century, Venetians continued to buy here pepper, ginger, cinnamon and other spices, silk, gold and silver threads, purple dye, sugar, wool, linen, cotton, soap, quicksilver, mastich, wheat, wine, and all manner of merchandise. The Venetians and the Genoese were established here in considerable numbers, and this was one of the main cities from which they ran their trade with the Black Sea area.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For the return of grain prices to "normal" levels after a crisis, see Morozzo della Rocca, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), p. 73 (16 May 1347). From Crete the information comes that peace has been made with the Mongols in Tana and that therefore the wheat which in the Romania used to cost 7–8 *hyperpyra* per *modium* now costs 5–6. For general price stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, see R. Romano, "Les prix au Moyen Age: dans le Proche Orient et dans l'Occident chrétien," *Annales*, 18 (1963), 699–703.

<sup>22</sup> Zibaldone da Canal: *Manoscritto mercantile del secolo XIV* (Venice, 1967), 69. Cf. Pegolotti, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 11), 33ff., where it is shown that in Constantinople and Pera one could buy and sell wax, skins, furs, soap, meat, cheese, nuts, honey, rice, oil, wine, grain, linen, cotton, alum, wool, silk, cloth, pepper, sugar, aloe, amber, coral, saffron, gold and silver threads, etc. Cf. also M. M. Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj i Venetsianskaja trgovlja v pervoj polovine XV v. po dannym knigi šchetov Džakomo Badoera," *VizVrem.* 30 (1969), 50–51.

The Byzantine lands also functioned as both an export market and an import market for Italian products. The Byzantine Empire was a food exporter to the West, at least until the middle of the fourteenth century. Grain was bought here and exported, despite some restrictions imposed by Byzantine treaties with Venice and Genoa. The Venetian Senate passed decrees concerning the sale price of wheat bought in Macedonia, Thrace, the Black Sea, and in the Romania from Modon up to the Straights. The wheat of Rodosto (the best in the Romania, according to Pegolotti) is specifically mentioned. The hinterland of Thessalonica is also singled out as an area from which wheat was exported.<sup>23</sup> Until the 1350's at least, Thessalonica had an active grain trade with Venice; ships from Negroponte carried cloth and other merchandise to Thessalonica and brought back what is described as the wheat of Macedonia.

In the first half of the fourteenth century, the city of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) sought its wheat in the Byzantine Empire and sometimes bought large quantities of it. Thus, in 1302, a decree was passed, allowing the export of cloth to the "Romania" but ordering that one third of the value of the cloth should be invested in wheat. A year later, the Great Council allowed the reexport of some wheat from the Romania to the King of Serbia. It may be argued that this grain came from the western part of Greece or the Peloponnesus, as it would regularly do later in the fourteenth century. But there is no ambiguity about the largest single purchase of wheat in this period. In November 1339, the commune of Dubrovnik found itself in debt to some merchants from Genoa and from the Romania, for the large sum of 20,000 *hyperpyra*, for wheat purchased, presumably during the summer. That this was an unusually large purchase is illustrated by the fact that the city found it difficult to repay the debt. The origins of this grain are stated clearly: it came from Constantinople and Thessalonica and was presumably grown in Thrace or on the Byzantine Black Sea coasts, and in Macedonia. This large purchase was also the last one involving Thracian or Macedonian wheat. In 1347, the commune instructed merchants to look for wheat first in Clarenza and then in Smyrna, Constantinople, Turkey, Negroponte, and the Black Sea.<sup>24</sup>

The importance of Byzantine and, of course, Black Sea grain is further illustrated by the fact that grain and its availability, price, and conditions of sale are the subject of some of the most important economic clauses in Venetian-Byzantine treaties between 1268 and the mid-fourteenth century. The Genoese, too, traded in Byzantine wheat, in conditions more favorable than those which obtained for the Venetians.<sup>25</sup> Of course, the Byzantine Empire is not to be compared as an export market for

<sup>23</sup> Thiriet, *Délibérations* (*supra*, note 5), I, nos. 327 (1315), 376 (1317), 346 (1316), 351 (1316), 418 (1319), 434 (1322), 440 (1323), 447 (1325), 453 (1326), 456 (1327), 272 (1312), et al.; Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), I, nos. 156 (1343), 347 (1359); Cessi and Sambin, *op. cit.*, VIII, 253 (1323); Pegolotti, *op. cit.*, 42; F. Thiriet, "Les Vénitiens à Thessalonique dans la première moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Byzantion*, 22 (1953), 323-32.

<sup>24</sup> B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1961), nos. 66, 72, 190, 186, 217; cf. no. 321 (1377). In 1344, there is mention of annual trips by Ragusan merchants to a certain "Camblacus" to buy grain. This personage has been identified by N. Bănescu with the Byzantine aristocrat Arsenios Tzambalakon, who had large estates in Macedonia ("Peut-on identifier le Zamblacus des documents ragusains?", *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, I [Paris, 1930], 32-35). Although Krekić challenges the identification, his arguments are not entirely convincing: Krekić, *op. cit.*, nos. 212 and 213.

<sup>25</sup> Laiou, *Constantinople* (*supra*, note 19), 57-76, 260-77; J. Chrysostomides, "Venetian Commercial Privileges under the Palaeologi," *Studi Veneziani*, 12 (1970), 267-356.

wheat with the great granaries—the Black Sea coasts and, after a certain point, the Asia Minor coast. These were the major wheat-exporting areas both to Europe and, often, to Constantinople. Nevertheless, the late medieval economy was structured in such a way that even relatively small wheat markets such as the Byzantine one had their significance in times of relative stability, such as the late thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century.

The important changes in the political situation after 1343 also altered the international wheat trade. In 1343, the Tatars expelled European traders from the Black Sea and forbade the export of wheat; the situation did not become stable until 1355. In the Byzantine Empire, the civil war between John VI Cantacuzenus and the regency for John V Palaeologus (1341–47) devastated Thrace and resulted in a tremendous disruption of production. The Asia Minor markets also were closed for a while between 1344 and 1353.<sup>26</sup> Near the end of the century, in 1390 and the years thereafter, Timurlane's invasions of the Black Sea area and the conquest of Asia Minor by the Ottomans once again created shortages of wheat. Prices rose, and the crisis forced a reorientation of the wheat trade. Both Venice and Genoa turned to Italy, Sicily, and Spain for wheat.<sup>27</sup> Within the Black Sea area itself there were important changes. Since the late thirteenth century, and through the first half of the fourteenth, Caffa had been a major center of wheat purchase and export. In 1343–44, at a time when there were political troubles with the Tatars, the products which changed hands in Caffa were primarily precious gems, slaves, skins, and alum.<sup>28</sup> By 1360–61, the Black Sea center of the wheat trade for Genoa was no longer Caffa but rather the Danube Delta, especially Chilia, where wheat was the single most important commodity exported to Pera; grain from Chilia and Licostomo continued to find its way to Genoa and, sometimes, even to Caffa in the 1380's. Both Pera and Caffa had to be provisioned from Licostomo and Maocastro in the early fifteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

The importance of Byzantine grain as an export commodity also changed at this time. After the mid-fourteenth century, as the countryside became increasingly more insecure because of Ottoman and Serbian raids and conquests, areas which had been wheat exporters became importers for longer or shorter periods of time. Thessalonica was unable to feed itself in 1350, when it was besieged by Stephen Dušan, and Venice was asked to supply it. Venice was obliged to take over the provisioning of Thessalonica throughout the years in which the city was in Venetian

<sup>26</sup> *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV*, Bonn ed., I–III (1828–1832) (hereafter Cantacuzenus), I, 137; II, 476; Gregoras (*supra*, note 15), II, 748; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, "Žitija dvuh vselenskih patriarhov XIV v.," *Zapiski istoriko-filologičeskago Fakul'tet imperatorskago S. Peterburškago universiteta*, 76 (1905), 124–26; Zachariadou, "Prix et marchés" (*supra*, note 15), 295–97.

<sup>27</sup> Heers, "Commercio" (*supra*, note 6), *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Balard, *Gênes* (*supra*, note 9), *passim*; G. Balbi and S. Raiteri, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Caffa e a Licostomo (sec. XIV)* (Bordighera, 1973), 20.

<sup>29</sup> M. Balard, "Les génois dans l'ouest de la Mer Noire au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Études Byzantines*, II (Bucharest, 1975), 21–32; Balbi and Raiteri, *op. cit.*, 193 and *passim*; G. Pistarino, *Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360–1361)* (Bordighera, 1971), *passim*; Ş. Papacostea, "De Vicina à Kilia. Byzantins et Génois aux bouches du Danube au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *RESEE*, 16 (1978), 65–80; O. Iliescu, "A la recherche de Kilia byzantine," *RESEE*, 16 (1978), 229–38. For numismatic evidence for trade in agricultural products between the Black Sea area and Constantinople in the 14th century, see T. Gerassimov, "Les hyperpères d'Andronic II et d'Andronic III et leur circulation en Bulgarie," *Byzantino-bulgarica*, 1 (1962), 213–36.

hands (1423–30).<sup>30</sup> Venetian proposals to the Ottomans for peace in 1426 included a clause which would have guaranteed the merchants access to the hinterland of Thessalonica—presumably so that the grain of Macedonia could once more flow to the city.<sup>31</sup>

Only western Greece and the Morea continued to export wheat, although in small quantities, throughout the fourteenth century and in the first half of the fifteenth. It went to Dubrovnik, where the grain might appear in the sources as grain of “Romania,” or merchants might be instructed to purchase grain in Turkey or in Romania.<sup>32</sup> But whenever the origins of the grain or the ports of loading are specified, they are most frequently Arta, Patras, Clarenza, or Coron. The Ragusan sources show almost yearly purchases of wheat and millet in the Romania, particularly in the region of Arta after 1420. It is to be assumed that this grain represented not merely the limited production of Epirus but also that of more fertile areas, Thessaly or even Macedonia.<sup>33</sup>

As for the Morea, there are documents showing purchases of wheat or its export from Modon and Coron, as well as mention of negotiations between Dubrovnik and the Despot Constantine Palaeologus (1431), which aimed at abolishing customs duties for Ragusan merchants dealing in grain.<sup>34</sup>

Wheat, then, was one of the most important Byzantine export commodities to the West. There were other exports as well. Legumes are mentioned, particularly from Thessalonica. Cotton and linen were exported from Thessalonica and the Peloponnesus in the fifteenth century, at a time when the internal problems of the Ottomans had somewhat slowed down their conquest of the Balkans. Wax, too, was exported to Dubrovnik from Arta.<sup>35</sup> And there are in the accounts of both Genoese and Venetian merchants commodities of unspecified origin (oil, wine, furs, etc.), some of which no doubt came from Byzantine territories. Certainly, the merchants of both cities traveled through the Byzantine Empire both by sea and by land (as in the route to Adrianople) and were free to buy and sell most products.

The Byzantine import market was also quite active, although once again its importance varied with political factors. The Italians sold to the Byzantines all sorts of merchandise, both the grain of the Black Sea when conditions were right and wines, soap, cloth, and a great variety of products (perfumes, furs, etc.) which

<sup>30</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), I, no. 237 (1350); II, nos. 1914 (1423), 1923 (1424), 1957 (1424), 1964 (1424), etc.; Thiriet, *Délibérations* (*supra*, note 5), II, no. 1276 (1424).

<sup>31</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes*, II, no. 2018 (1426). Venice, however, was occasionally able to buy wheat from Agathopolis on the Black Sea coast in the 15th century: Badoer (*supra*, note 7), 108. On the Constantinopolitan trade of the first half of the 15th century, cf. M. M. Šitikov, “Torgovlja prodovolstviem v Konstantinopole i ego okrestnosti v pervoj polovine XV v.,” *Antičnaja drevnost i srednie veka*, 8 (1972), 120–27.

<sup>32</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 24), nos. 431, 432, 433 (20–28 Sept. 1392), 435 (1 Oct. 1392), 440 (10 March 1393), 666, 668, 670–72 (Sept. 1421–Feb. 1422), 846 (25 Nov. 1435), 1154–56 (1449), 1161 (1450), 1164–68 (1450), 1171–72 (1450), 1189, 1190, 1194 (1450), 1288–89 (1453).

<sup>33</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.*, Ragusa—nos. 683 (22 June 1423), 684 (5 and 14 Oct. 1423), 687 (23 Feb. 1424); Valona—no. 726 (13 June 1426); Arta—no. 848 (19 Dec. 1436), 871 (1436), 873 (1436), 876 (1436), 873 (1436), 876 (1436), 902, 903 (1437), 935 (1439), 937 (1439).

<sup>34</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.*, nos. 787 (16 Feb. 1431), 870 (1436), 913 (1437), 927 (1438), 993, 1004 (1443), 1010 (1443), 1072 (1444), 967 (1441), 1149 (1449, Levadia), 1244 (1452), 1286 (1453). Cf. Thiriet, *Régestes*, II, no. 1697 (1418).

<sup>35</sup> G. M. Thomas, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum*, I (Venice, 1880; repr. New York, n.d.) (hereafter Thomas, *Diplomatarium*), 166; Thiriet, *Régestes*, II, nos. 1193 (1405), 1204 (1406), 1340 (1409); Krekić, *op. cit.*, nos. 281 (1370), 762 (1428), 787 (1431), 792 (1436).

they got from their trade with the Crimea and Alexandria.<sup>36</sup> Cloth, primarily from Champagne and Lombardy, was the main Italian export in terms of value. In 1281, as can be seen from Genoese notarial documents, it was one of the main items for which *commenda* contracts were made among Genoese merchants in their colony at Pera. At this time, *commenda* contracts frequently mentioned the geographic area in which the traveling partner should trade. It is specifically stated that this cloth should be sold within the Byzantine Empire only. Often the traveling partner took the cloth to the city of Adrianople, which seems to have been an important trade center. Occasionally furriers received in *commenda* cloth to sell at Adrianople, where, presumably, they were going in order to buy furs.<sup>37</sup> French and Italian cloth was also an important commodity in Caffa in the late thirteenth century, from where it was taken to Tana, Trebizond, and Pera, and was a major item in the accounts of Badoer.<sup>38</sup> For the merchants of Dubrovnik, too, cloth formed the major item of export, whether this was Italian fabric that was reexported to the Levant or, after 1420, cloth of local manufacture. This was usually taken to Arta (although at times the general term "Romania" is used), and sometimes its export was linked to imports of raw material from the area.<sup>39</sup>

The European cloth exported to the Levant was of varying quality, both for everyday use and luxury cloth. The Byzantine aristocracy spent a great deal of money for Italian cloth. At the end of his History, Nicephorus Gregoras complained of the decline of the Empire; he saw it partly in the appearance of young fashionable men who appeared in church on Sundays dressed in peculiar fashions with Italian hats and "Persian" dresses, or the reverse. A Byzantine refugee, who had fled Constantinople in 1453 and stayed in Dubrovnik, had in his possession and gave as guarantee for a loan valuable pieces of velvet clothing, lined with black Florentine cloth.<sup>40</sup> This spendthrift attitude of the Byzantine aristocracy (also mentioned and decried by Bessarion) makes a neat contrast with the attitude of one of the great exporters of Italian cloth to the Levant. In the early sixteenth century the Genoese sought to limit the consumption of expensive cloth and jewelry in order to free money for investment.<sup>41</sup>

The Byzantine Empire as an import market seems to have been quite significant. The Constantinopolitan market in particular was so important both for the transit and for the import trade that in 1368 the Venetian senate pressed for the

<sup>36</sup> On the Black Sea grain, see G. I. Brătianu, "Etudes sur l'approvisionnement de Constantinople et le monopole du blé à l'époque byzantine et Ottomane," in *Etudes byzantines d'histoire économique et sociale* (Paris, 1938), 129–81; A. E. Laiou, "The Provisioning of Constantinople During the Winter of 1306–1307," *Byzantion*, 37 (1967), 91–113.

<sup>37</sup> G. I. Brătianu, *Actes des notaires génois de Péra et de Caffa de la fin du 13<sup>e</sup> siècle, 1281–1290* (Bucharest, 1927), nos. III (27 June 1281), IV (28 June 1281), VI (28 June 1281), VIII, XXVII, XLI (11 July 1281), LXI (23 July 1281), XLIV (16 July 1281), LXI (23 July 1281), LXII, LXIV.

<sup>38</sup> Balard, *Gênes* (*supra*, note 9), *passim*; cf., for example, nos. 65, 78, 87, 338, 283, 237, 263, and 834. Cf. Balbi and Raiteri, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 28), no. 15 (1344); Badoer (*supra*, note 7), *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.*, nos. 66 (1302), 306 (1373), 729 (1426), 1254–56 (1452), 1292–93 (1453), 1309 (1454), 1241 (1452), 1247–48 (1452), 1239 (1452), 1191 (1450), 1237 (1452). In 1452, the Venetians complained about this new activity of the Ragusans (the sale of Ragusan cloth to the Levant), receiving as an answer that it was a question of necessity, since the much more profitable markets of Serbia and Bosnia were temporarily closed.

<sup>40</sup> Gregoras (*supra*, note 15), III, 555–56; Krekić, *op. cit.*, no. 1310 (1454). The man was John Palaeologus.

<sup>41</sup> Heers, "Mode" (*supra*, note 9), 1100–1.

conclusion of a treaty with John V Palaeologus because there was a vast quantity of merchandise which should be sent from Venice to Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> The variety of exchange and financial transactions which occurred in Constantinople even as late as the fifteenth century indicates that money was still being spent on Italian products.<sup>43</sup>

It is clear, then, that the Byzantine Empire functioned as an integral part of the international trade complex in the Eastern Mediterranean. In terms of the division of labor, its position was dual. Constantinople was a center of exchange transactions and of the transit trade, and the Byzantine hinterland was, when political circumstances permitted, an exporter of some food and raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. That was a subordinate position since, to the extent that the market was efficient, it did not allow the Byzantines to develop their own manufactures. It is not insignificant that the Byzantine-owned shops in Constantinople in the early fifteenth century were primarily bakeries, taverns, apothecary shops, dairy shops.<sup>44</sup> Nor is it accidental that the textile industry which had flourished in the Morea until the twelfth and early thirteenth century declined, for the most part, in subsequent centuries. The connection, indeed, was seen by some contemporaries and discussed in precise terms. Plethon wrote, "It is a great evil for a society which produces wool, linen, silk, cotton, to be unable to fashion these into garments and instead to wear the clothes made in the lands beyond the Ionian sea from wool produced in the Atlantic."<sup>45</sup> His student, Cardinal Bessarion, also complained of this particular kind of economic retrogression: the Byzantines, he said, even in the Peloponnesus, had allowed themselves to become importers of manufactured goods and had even lost the art of making woolen cloth.<sup>46</sup>

If in terms of *production* Byzantium was becoming a secondary economy, there is still another question to be posed: to what extent and in what form was the domestic *exchange* economy influenced by the larger international exchange economy in which the Empire participated?

The problem posed here is not entirely novel, although the terms of reference are. Historians have in the past examined the effects of the presence of Italian merchants on Byzantine trade, urban life, and the merchant class. Traditionally, it has been argued that the Italians destroyed Byzantine trade and cities, because

<sup>42</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), I, nos. 275 (1355), 455 (1368), 482 (1369). Cf. *infra*, p. 204.

<sup>43</sup> For the importance of Constantinople as a market in the first half of the 14th century, see Ibn Battuta, who visited the city in 1331–32 and reveals its commercial activity. He talks of the many and great "bazaars" of the city, and of Pera which was reserved to "Frankish" Christians, i.e., Genoese, Venetians, "Romans," and the people of France: "They are all men of commerce and their harbour is one of the largest in the world; I saw there about 100 galleys and other large ships, and the small ships are too many to be counted." Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 9), 159. For Constantinople in the fifteenth century, see Badoer, *passim*, and *infra*, pp. 203–4.

<sup>44</sup> F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi*, II (Vienna, 1862), 367–68 (1400), 358–59 (1400), 355 (*s.a.*), 416 (*s.a.*), 441–42 (*s.a.*), 439–41 (1400), 452–54 (*s.a.*), 473–74 (*s.a.*), 474–75 (*s.a.*).

<sup>45</sup> Sp. Lambros, *Παλαιολογία και Πελοποννησιακά*, III (Athens, 1926), 263: τῶν γὰρ ξενικῶν τούτων ἐσθιμμάτων πολλὴ ἀλογία καὶ δεῖσθαι. Οὐ γὰρ σμικρὰ πού κακία πολιτείας, παρόντων μὲν ἐρίων τούτων, ὧν ἡ χώρα φέρει, παρόντος δὲ λίου, οὐσης δὲ βύσσου, δυντῶν δὲ βαμβυκίνων, μὴ τούτοις τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀμπεχόνην οὕτως ὅπως ἂν δυνώμεθα φιλοτεχνεῖν, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἔξωθεν μὲν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀτλαντικοῦ πελάγους κομιζομένων ἐκείνων ἐρίων, ὑπὲρ δὲ τὸν Ἰόνιον εἰς ἐσθῆτα σκευαζομένων δεομένους φέρεσθαι." On the silk industry of the Morea before 1204, cf. Villehardouin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2), § 250; D. A. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, II (Athens, 1953), 251–52.

<sup>46</sup> Lambros, *op. cit.*, IV (Athens, 1930), 44 ff.

the native merchant could not compete with the foreigner's greater capital and privileged condition. Perhaps the clearest statement of this view may be found in A. A. Vasiliev: "Trade was no longer carried on by the Byzantines; it passed entirely into the hands of the Western merchants, mainly those of the Venetians and the Genoese, but to some extent those of the Pisans, Florentines and others."<sup>47</sup> This view has prevailed for a number of reasons. First, it accords with dramatic contemporary statements, made usually at times of crisis, and with a specific point in mind. Of many such statements the best known is the complaint of Nicephorus Gregoras who claimed that, since the Westerners had been able to control the Byzantine seas, "they had acquired the wealth of the inhabitants of Byzantium and almost all the revenues that derive from the sea."<sup>48</sup> The most dramatic may well be the statement of the Patriarch Athanasius I of Constantinople, who in the early fourteenth century accused the Italians, and more specifically the Genoese, of holding Constantinople in a vise by controlling its provisioning and of daring to mock the Byzantines, asking for their women in exchange for grain.<sup>49</sup> Second, the traditional view is due to a confusion between the fate of the Byzantine state and that of particular social classes. The Palaeologan state was incontrovertibly poor and its revenues from trade minimal, as suggested by the statement that in the mid-fourteenth century the Byzantines received only 30,000 *hyperpyra* a year from customs duties, while the Genoese in Pera had 200,000.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, in a decentralized state such as the Palaeologan one, the poverty of the central authority does not mean that all members of the society were poor; the aristocracy was rich and powerful in this period, and it is arguable that there was also a considerable number of people who made money from trade. Finally, the view I have outlined above is due to a paucity of sources which is only recently being remedied by the publication of Western documents and notarial accounts. These materials illuminate the already existing ones and permit a new interpretation of the structure of the exchange economy of the Late Byzantine period. The participation of the natives in commercial enterprise did not end; it continued and was even more evident than in previous periods, but it was subject to rather precise limitations.<sup>50a</sup>

<sup>47</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, 1952), 685. Cf. also G. I. Brătianu, *Etudes byzantines d'histoire économique et sociale* (Paris, 1938), 157–58. On the contrary, Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj" (*supra*, note 22), has posed the problem correctly and pointed out the continuing existence of the Byzantine merchant. Cf. also Oikonomides, *op. cit.* (*supra*, ed. note \*), *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Gregoras (*supra*, note 15), II, 841: ἑλᾶθον μὴ μόνον τὴν τῶν Βυζαντιῶν εὐπορίαν καὶ μικροῦ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐκ Θεσσαλονίκης πρόσσοδον προσελόμενοι . . . Cf. *ibid.*, I, 527. The opposing view of Cydones, who wrote that Thessalonica remained a commercial city which was full of merchants from all over the world and amazed contemporaries, is less often quoted in this connection: Cydones, *Monodia occisorum Thessalonicae*, PG, 109, col. 641: Ἀγορά τε τοὺς ἐξ ἀπάσης γῆς ὑποδεχομένη καὶ τοὺς συνιόντας, οὗ γῆς εἶεν, ἀπορεῖν ἀναγκάλουσα . . .

<sup>49</sup> Laiou, "Provisioning" (*supra*, note 36), 96; A.-M. Maffry Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople* . . . , DOT, III (Washington, D.C., 1975), 244.

<sup>50</sup> Gregoras, II, 841–42.

<sup>50a</sup> In what follows, the terms "Greek" and "Byzantine" merchant will be used. The first designates people with Greek names, or people who are, in the Western sources, qualified as "Grecus." The second denotes, generally speaking, the Greek subjects of the Byzantine emperor. In practice, this definition begins to break down in the second half of the 14th century, with the rapid conquest of the provinces by Serbs, Turks, and others. With time, the term "Byzantine," if applied strictly, would only include the inhabitants of Constantinople and the Despotate of the Morea. In my discussion of the Byzantine merchant after ca. 1350, I have treated first the merchants of Constantinople and the Black Sea area, and then, separately, those from the provinces.

Two important sets of documents survive from the end of the thirteenth century. They are the books of notaries active in the Genoese colonies of Pera and Caffa in 1281 and 1289–90 respectively. They provide a vivid picture of Genoese commerce at this time. It is a brisk trade, which encompasses the Black Sea and Genoa, as well as areas much farther away. From Pera the merchants and the merchandise go to Caffa and other Black Sea ports, to Adrianople, to the Byzantine Empire in general, to Genoa, Negroponte, and, more rarely, to Syria. From Caffa they sail mostly to Pera, Tana, and Genoa: it is in these places, and in Caffa itself, that the majority of contracts are fulfilled. But the merchants sail also to Constantinople, Thessalonica, Chios, the Romania, Alexandria, Sinope, Smyrna, Tabriz, Maocastro, and Georgia. It is a long-distance trade, for which large ships (*navis*, *tarida*) are used.<sup>51</sup> The main commodities exchanged are grain, spices, slaves, alum, cloth, and furs.

The most common form of investment is the *commenda* contract, in which one of the partners (or both) invests capital, only one travels, and the profits are shared. There is a great spread in the size of the capital invested in such enterprises; the two highest investments are of 92,800 *aspres baricats* (5,155.5 *hyperpyra*) and of 32,280 *aspres baricats* (1,793 *hyperpyra*), while the two smallest consist of 200 *aspres baricats* (11 *hyperpyra*) and 147 *aspres baricats* (8 *hyperpyra*). But the total for 133 *commenda* contracts in the sixteen months to which the Caffa documentation extends is 696,538 *aspres baricats*, or 38,696 *hyperpyra*, a considerable sum of money. Six contracts of *societas maris* (in which both partners invest) engage a combined capital of 130,337 *aspres baricats*, or 7,241 *hyperpyra*, and involve men of great Genoese merchant families.<sup>52</sup>

This is the mainstream Genoese commercial activity; a substantial trade, in which the great merchants are highly visible. The Byzantine participation in this activity is virtually nonexistent. Only two of the 151 documents from Pera mention Greeks: one is in connection with a house sale, and the other concerns the sale of a slave by a Byzantine banker (Manuel) who lives in Pera.<sup>53</sup> Among the 903 documents from Caffa, Greeks may be found in only thirty-one (3 percent). Of these documents, six concern noncommercial matters, five are real-estate transactions, seven are sales of slaves, and only thirteen are commercial contracts.<sup>54</sup> For the most part, the Greek merchants mentioned are involved in trade within the Black Sea area. In four cases (nos. 48, 409, 410, 412), Greek merchants rent ships (*taride*) from Genoese in order to load grain and pigs (no. 412) and carry the merchandise to Trebizond or Kerasous on the northern coast of the Black Sea. In one case, the cargo of the rented ship is to consist of fish (no. 438). In another (no. 430), two Greek traders place their small cargo of grain (100 *modii*) on a ship through a Genoese trader, who promises to deliver the merchandise to them in Trebizond, while in another

<sup>51</sup> Brătianu, *Actes* (*supra*, note 37), nos. CVII, CCXI, CXII. On shipping and types of ships, see E. H. Byrne, *Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939).

<sup>52</sup> Balard, *Gênes* (*supra*, note 9), 40–41, and nos. 329, 525, 336, 693, 779, and 830. One *hyperpyron* was equivalent to 18 *aspres baricats*.

<sup>53</sup> Brătianu, *Actes*, nos. CXVIII, CXLIII.

<sup>54</sup> Noncommercial contracts: Balard, *Gênes*, nos. 55, 406–7, 514, 537, 741; real estate: *ibid.*, nos. 109, 329, 595, 763, 853; slave sales: *ibid.*, nos. 33, 106, 183, 223, 594, 767; commercial contracts: *ibid.*, nos. 48, 208, 212, 409, 410, 412, 430, 438, 459, 505, 529, 535, 875.

case (no. 410), the Greek who rents the ship seems to be in partnership with a Genoese merchant. Three other Greek merchants buy a little millet in Caffa to carry to Trebizond (no. 505). The smallness of this transaction may be seen from the fact that three Greeks together buy 154 *modii* of millet, which is the fee (in kind) that had been charged by a Genoese shipmaster for the transport of 700 *modii* of millet.

In terms of financial enterprise, it is noteworthy that there is not a single *commenda* contract involving Greeks. There are two exchange contracts—these are contracts which involve the repayment of a loan in a different place and a different currency from that in which it was contracted, thus bypassing the usury legislation of the Catholic Church, since the rate of interest is concealed in the rate of exchange. Only one of these transactions (no. 212) is interesting. It involves a Byzantine from Constantinople who lent a Genoese 1200 *aspres baricats* (66.7 *hyperpyra*). In another case (no. 208), a much smaller sum (10 *hyperpyra*) is involved. There is, finally, a case in which a man named Michael Marvasiatus sells merchandise to two Genoese, who will pay him 228 *hyperpyra* in Pera after the arrival of their ship—a transaction which involves payments in different currencies and is, therefore, similar to an exchange contract (no. 529). Some of these Greek traders come from the Byzantine Empire. Two Monemvasiots seem to have penetrated the Black Sea trade network. One, Michael Marvasiatus, sold some merchandise to Genoese merchants, and another was involved in the purchase and sale of fish. Nicholas of Constantinople was the only Greek from the capital. Others come from the Black Sea area: there is a merchant (Nichetas) from Tana and one (Todos) from Trebizond. The rest have no known place of origin and must be assumed to have been locals. Indeed one of the persons is certainly a local, being the daughter of a butcher in Caffa, who bought merchandise valued at 1,200 *aspres baricats* (66.7 *hyperpyra*) from a Genoese.<sup>55</sup>

Although these documents are too few to permit general conclusions, their small number is in itself suggestive. The Greeks, and especially those from the Byzantine Empire, seem to be only minimally involved in the Black Sea trade—although it is possible, and indeed probable, that they do engage in small-scale operations which do not find their way into the Genoese records. Those Greeks who do appear are involved in the grain or provisions trade in a small way. Their enterprise is geographically limited: even in terms of financial contracts, in only two cases do the activities of the Greeks reach Pera. The capital involved is small. The Greeks are incorporated to some extent in the fiscal system of the Black Sea trade: they form partnerships and engage in exchange contracts. But the fact that they do not form *commenda* partnerships with the Genoese merchants, coupled with the fact that none of them own the ships on which their merchandise is transported, indicates that their activities are subordinated to those of the Italians, who control the major forms of investment and transportation.

In the 1340's, Byzantine traders penetrated into the Black Sea trade network in ways which caused the Genoese some concern.<sup>56</sup> That this penetration was outside the normal state of affairs may be seen from the fact that the Byzantine merchant

<sup>55</sup> Balard, *Gênes*, nos. 529, 438, 412, 223, 595, 875, 430, 535.

<sup>56</sup> See *infra*, pp. 192–95.

is as little visible in Caffa of the 1340's and the 1380's as he was in the late thirteenth century. The dossier of the notary Nicolò Beltrame contains eighty-three documents for the period from 30 November 1343 to *ca.* 15 August 1344. This was a particularly difficult time for the Genoese colony, for the Mongols had closed Tana to both the Venetians and the Genoese and had attacked Caffa. Normal relations were not restored until 1350. The commune was highly preoccupied with its defense; it hired one hundred crossbowmen and sent a trireme to Constantinople at some expense, presumably to seek help.<sup>57</sup> The difficult circumstances are reflected in the commercial documents that have survived. Forty-one of the eighty-three documents concern old contracts, their repayment, or arrangements for their repayment; only fourteen are new contracts, and two of these are not commercial at all but have to do with the defense of the commune.<sup>58</sup> The commodities mentioned in both the old and the new contracts are spices, slaves, and pearls; the capital invested in the new contracts is rather small. The largest sum is, significantly, the loan of 2,062 *hyperpyra* and 2.5 carats of gold given to the commune for the hire of crossbowmen. The smallest (no. 74) is a loan of one florin. As for the form of investment, there are among the new contracts some straight loans (*mutuo*), some exchange contracts (*cambio*), and some sales of ships. No *commenda* was made in 1343–44, although both *commenda* contracts and *societates maris* appear among the older contracts mentioned in the acts.<sup>59</sup>

The presence of Greek and Byzantine merchants in Caffa at this time is minimal. There are some Greeks who seem settled in the city. One, Manuel Ferro of Constantinople, had owned property in Caffa, and his widow, daughter of another Constantinopolitan, still lived there in 1344.<sup>60</sup> Others appear to be artisans working in Caffa and probably engaged in some minor investment in trade.<sup>61</sup> Of two other Greeks who bought a merchant ship (*lignum de orlo*), one was certainly a citizen and inhabitant of Caffa. Only two of those in some way engaged in trade or financial transactions are Greeks from outside Caffa. Michael of Negroponte (assuming that he is Greek, which is not certain) made an exchange contract to be repaid to him in Simisso, and Iano Platisseri (Platycheris) of Trebizond contracted a loan in Caffa for 50 aspres. Indeed, Greeks from the Empire of Trebizond seem to have traveled to the Crimea with a greater frequency than the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire. They used either their own ships or those of the Italians. Thus, sometime in 1344–45, a Greek merchant from Trebizond sailed to the northern coast of the Black Sea on a "Frankish" ship in pursuit of his profession. He landed in the Cimmerian Bosphorus where, for unknown reasons, the captain of the ship handed him over to the Mongols. The man was later executed, thus becoming a saint. A few

<sup>57</sup> Balbi and Raiteri, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 28), nos. 35, 36, 11. The commune of Caffa had some difficulty providing for its defense, as can be seen from a rather pathetic request for help to the Doge of Genoa in 1346–49: G. Petti Balbi, "Caffa e Pera a metà del Trecento," *RESEE*, 16 (1978), 217–28.

<sup>58</sup> Old contracts: Balbi and Raiteri, *op. cit.*, nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 26, 28, 32, 33, 37–40, 42–44, 47, 50, 51, 56, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 70, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 82, 80. New contracts: *ibid.*, nos. 5, 8, 11, 22, 23, 31, 35, 45, 62, 63, 72, 74, 78, 83.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 12, 15, 51, 32, 79, 19, 26.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 61.

<sup>61</sup> Such is the case of Giorgio, *fillatore* (spinner), son of Michele Tripodi di Simisso, *marmarius*, who owed some money in *hyperpyra* of Pera to the owner of a ship that made the journey to Pera: *ibid.*, no. 43.

years earlier, a Muslim traveler, Ibn Battuta, had hired a Greek ship to take him from Sinope to Qiran (Solgat) in the Crimea.<sup>62</sup>

There is only one known and named case of a Byzantine merchant in Caffa in the 1340's. This was a man named Sideriotes, a member of the aristocracy, who lost some of his money in Caffa.<sup>62a</sup> The virtual absence of the Byzantine and even the Greek-speaking trader may have been a structural phenomenon of the Genoese controlled economic activities of that city. In the early 1380's, for example, although the Greek community at Caffa was a large one, it seems to have consisted primarily of artisans. Several Greek-speaking inhabitants of Caffa appear in the documents; they are burgesses of the city and seem perfectly integrated in its economic and institutional life; but only one, a certain Calo Iane (Ioannes) Zazelli, may possibly have been a trader.<sup>63</sup> This structural trait, however, is probably exaggerated in the Genoese sources and was in any case challenged, certainly in the 1340's, and perhaps earlier, by Byzantine merchants taking advantage of the difficulties which the Venetians and the Genoese were encountering in the Crimea.

The Byzantine merchant of Constantinople appears rather suddenly in the sources in the year 1347. His appearance is not modest. In 1347, when, at the conclusion of the civil war, John VI Cantacuzenus entered the capital of a devastated Empire, he found that the only group of people with disposable capital were the merchants and bankers of the city. To them he appealed, asking for money for the army and for rebuilding the imperial fleet. At first, neither the merchants nor, especially, the bankers were interested. They refused him the money, and some of them tried to get the young Emperor John V to appeal to the Genoese of Pera for help and thus to renew the civil war.<sup>64</sup> Only later did they support Cantacuzenus' plans to create a navy.

The activities of these merchants can only be dimly discerned, although further research will no doubt allow us to describe them more specifically. Activity at the port of Constantinople had, it seems, increased during the last years of the civil war between John V Palaeologus and John VI Cantacuzenus and had continued to increase after the conclusion of that war. The merchants had a considerable number (οὐκ ὀλίγας) of sailing ships (ὀκκάδας, ναῦς φορτηγούς) with which they traded both in the Aegean and in the Black Sea. They had warehouses full of merchandise along the coast outside Constantinople. Their activities were extensive, and they were able to provide substantially, if not wholly, for the provisioning of Constantinople with grain. For, when the Genoese burned their warehouses and seized or burned their grain ships and other vessels (August 1348), the city suffered from shortages

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 62, 5, 8. On St. John the Young, see P. Nasturel, "Une prétendue œuvre de Grégoire Tsamblak: Le martyre de Saint Jean le nouveau," *Actes du premier Congrès international des Études balkaniques et sud-est européennes*, 6 (1971), 345–51. Cf. Ibn Battuta, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 9), 141.

<sup>62a</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 44), I, 279 (October–December 1348).

<sup>63</sup> G. Airaldi, *Studi e documenti su Genova e l'Oltremare* (Genoa, 1974); on Zazelli, see pp. 75 ff. and 80–82. In the first half of the 15th century, the Greek inhabitants of the Genoese Black Sea colonies complained about their subordinate position. In the town of Cembalo, the complaints led to a rebellion in 1433; D. Andrews, "Moscow and the Crimea in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries" (paper delivered at the Twelfth Spring Symposium, University of Birmingham, 1978, on the subject *The Byzantine Black Sea*).

<sup>64</sup> Cantacuzenus (*supra*, note 26), III, 33–43.

of grain and other commodities.<sup>65</sup> The presumed monopoly of the Genoese in the provisioning of Constantinople, a monopoly vividly and perhaps incorrectly described in the Byzantine sources, did not exist in the late 1340's.

The appearance of the Byzantine merchant of Constantinople was not a phenomenon which started in the late 1340's. Merchant fleets are not built in a day, nor are financial and commercial techniques acquired suddenly. In fact, the second civil war had shown the existence of a considerable merchant element in Constantinople, in the coastal cities of Thrace, in Adrianople, in Thessalonica. This element supported Alexios Apokaukos who, in return, based his power on the navy (which he developed by using the confiscated moneys of the aristocracy), on the population of the coastal cities, and to some extent on the merchants. Indeed, Cantacuzenus accused him of planning to create a very powerful navy and to rule over a state which, having virtually no hinterland, would consist of the islands (of the northern Aegean), and the cities of the coast; Constantinople then would become a purely maritime and commercial city.<sup>65a</sup> Whereas this statement of Cantacuzenus may be an exaggeration, nevertheless it suggests the existence of a relatively powerful merchant class to which such political ideas might appear agreeable.

The activities of these merchants were probably expanded in the 1340's because of the unsettling events which hindered Italian commerce in the Black Sea area. But there are some indications which suggest that even in earlier years these activities were geographically widespread and involved large amounts of capital. Thus, the Life of St. Michael, written by Theodore Metochites, mentions in passing the situation in the port of Alexandria at the time of the saint's martyrdom, probably in the late thirteenth century. There were, at the time, in Alexandria, "Romans who had come for the abovementioned embassy, and those who were in the city for trade, and Italians; the city is always full of them, for trade. . . ." In 1319, the Byzantine government requested from the Venetians reparations for damages suffered by Byzantine merchants, among them some from Constantinople, in the years 1313-16. Some of the activities of these people may have been transacted through or in Pera, where, for one thing, the import and export taxes of two percent imposed by the Commune were much more accommodating than the ten percent charged by the Byzantine customs officials.<sup>66</sup> This is suggested by the fact that the

<sup>65</sup> Cantacuzenus, III, 68-70, 80-81: Cantacuzenus taxes Byzantine ships bringing wheat ἐξ ἀλλοδαπῆς; Gregoras (*supra*, note 15), II, 841-70, esp. 847-49.

<sup>65a</sup> Cantacuzenus, II, 537: ἐσκέψατο πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν μετὰγειν καὶ πρὸς τυραννίδα τὴν πολιτείαν μεσιστᾶν. . . καὶ ἀμελεῖν μὲν παντάπασι τῆς ἡπείρου, νήσων δὲ ἔχεσθαι καὶ θαλάσσης, καὶ Βυζαντίους ἐκ θαλάττης τρέφεσθαι καθιστᾶν ἐμπορευομένους ταῖς ναυσί. . . On the merchant class of Constantinople, see also K. P. Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion in Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert; Konstantinopel in der Bürgerkriegsperiode von 1341 bis 1354* (Berlin, 1971).

<sup>66</sup> St. Michael's Life is published in *ActaSS*, Nov., IV, 669-78. The passage is on p. 676: 'Ρωμαῖοι, τῶν διὰ τὴν πρεσβείαν, ἤπερ εἴρηται, καὶ δι' ἐμπορίαν παρατυχόντων τῇ πόλει, Ἴταλοὶ καὶ τούτων γε πλήρης διὰ τὰς ἐμπορίας ἡ πόλις αἰέ. . . As late as 1349 there were Byzantine merchants traveling to Egypt. In that year, Manuel Sergopoulos, as John VI's ambassador to the Sultan, asked and received assurance that the Byzantine merchants (πραγματευταί) would be well received and allowed to stay in safety: Cantacuzenus, III, 98. On Sergopoulos, see P. Magdalino, "An Unpublished Pronoia Grant of the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century," *ZVI*, 18 (1978), 155-63. For the list of 1319, see Thomas, *Diplomatarium* (*supra*, note 35), no. 72, p. 127: the Venetians had gotten from merchants of Thessalonica, Constantinople, and other areas merchandise valued at 10,000 *hyperpyra*. On Byzantine commercial duties and duty exemptions, see H. Antoniadis-Bibicou,

transactions described both in the Italian and in a few Greek documentary sources show the loading and unloading of merchandise and the payment of contracts occurring in Pera much more frequently than in Constantinople. Only in 1348 did John VI lower the taxes payable at the port of Constantinople to two percent. This measure was designed to increase the revenues of the Byzantine government and also to undercut the Genoese domination over maritime trade; it would have appealed primarily to Byzantine merchants and probably to Westerners other than the privileged Venetians and Genoese and presumably would have given an incentive to such people to invest more in trade. And it was this measure, together with the increase in Byzantine commercial activity, that frightened the Genoese and provoked them into war with John VI. Indeed, the Byzantine historians stress the Genoese desire both to "prevent the Romans from sailing" and to safeguard their lion's share of the port duties of Constantinople.<sup>67</sup>

Once the Genoese burned the Byzantine merchant ships and warehouses, the merchants of Constantinople, who had been most touched by this act of hostility, asked John VI to respond by fighting. In fact, he raised money in Constantinople and armed some ships with untrained crews to fight the Genoese. Apparently, the war was a popular one, and builders, smiths, servants, and other workers took to the sea.<sup>68</sup> The first phase of the war ended with the defeat of the Byzantines and the conclusion of a humiliating peace in 1349.<sup>69</sup>

As a result of this Byzantine defeat, the Genoese were able to establish a customs station on the European side of the Bosphorus, where they levied duties on all those who tried to sail into the Black Sea. They tried to stop both Byzantines and Venetians from sailing and trading in Tana, the Sea of Azov, and the Crimea—and it is rather impressive that the Byzantine merchants were important enough to warrant such an effort on Genoa's part.

The rivalry of Venice and Genoa in the Black Sea area erupted in another war in 1351. The Byzantines became involved, and for them the war ended in defeat in May 1352. Among the terms of the treaty that followed the conclusion of peace, two are of particular interest to us. In one, the Emperor promised not to levy a *comerchium* upon any Greek buying merchandise from the Genoese, unless the same duty were to be levied on transactions between Greeks—an effort by Genoa to avoid being undercut by Greek traders.

The second clause forbade the Byzantines to sail to Tana or the Sea of Azov except at times when the Genoese themselves sailed there. This article must have

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*Recherches sur les douanes à Byzance* (Paris, 1963), 97 ff. On the policy, initiated by the Comneni and followed by the Palaeologi, of granting foreigners (primarily the Venetians and the Genoese) exemptions from customs duties, see, among others, Heyd, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), I, 428 ff.; Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 44), III, 84 ff. Cf. D. J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 87 ff., 300–4.

<sup>67</sup> Cantacuzenus (*supra*, note 26), III, 68 ff.; Gregoras (*supra*, note 15), II, 841 ff. The port cleared by John VI in 1351 so that larger ships could reach Constantinople may have been envisaged as serving commercial as well as military purposes: G. Guiland, "Les ports de Byzance sur la Propontide," *Byzantion*, 23 (1953), 235–38.

<sup>68</sup> Gregoras, II, 850–51, 857; Cantacuzenus, III, 71–73.

<sup>69</sup> Gregoras, II, 877; D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* (London, 1972), 227–34.

been much debated by John Cantacuzenus, since it was stated that it was not final and could be overruled by the Doge of Genoa.<sup>70</sup>

In 1355, the peace treaty between Venice and Genoa stipulated that neither the Genoese nor the Venetians would sail to Tana for a period of three years. This clause was a clear effort on the part of Genoa to build up her own port of Caffa, and was implemented by Venice. Only in 1358 did the Venetians send ships to Tana, and a year later they complained that the Genoese podestà in Pera created trouble for the ships returning from Tana.<sup>71</sup>

The episodes of 1347–52 are the only known cases in which the Byzantine merchants seem to have tried to break into at least part of the great commerce of the Black Sea. The clause of the treaty of 1352 prohibiting the Byzantines from sailing to Tana might possibly have been prompted less by the commercial activities of the Byzantines than by the Venetian-Genoese rivalry and by Genoa's fear that the Venetians might use Byzantine ships or ships under nominal Byzantine control to try to revive their Black Sea commerce. Even if this is the case, it is clear that, for a time at least, Byzantine commercial activity was considerable and that an effort was made to break its dependence on the Genoese.

After 1352 and through the early fifteenth century, Byzantine merchants do appear both in the Black Sea and in Constantinople and Pera, and their activities are of some interest. In the Black Sea, in 1360–61, there is a considerable number of Greek merchants, shipmasters, and people who invest in trade. The notary Antonio di Ponzò produced ninety-nine acts in Chilia on the Danube delta between the end of November 1360 and March 1361; thirty-eight percent of these documents (38 acts) mention one or more Greeks as participants in the various transactions. At least twenty-six of these acts are pure commercial transactions: exchange contracts, loans, renting of ships or space on ships, and sale of merchandise.<sup>72</sup>

Even a cursory glance at the material shows how completely the Greeks were integrated in the economic activities of this port. Chilia was at this time primarily an outlet for the grain trade and for trade in wax, honey, and slaves. Several people with Greek names (48 in all) appear in these documents. They hail from various areas, mostly along the Black Sea coast: Trebizond, Caffa, Kerasous, Maocastro, Vičina, Mesembria. There are two Greeks from Adrianople, which had not yet been captured by the Turks.<sup>73</sup> Greeks from Pera and Constantinople are also mentioned. Like the Italians, these people transported their merchandise (grain,

<sup>70</sup> Gregoras, III, 145, 151; P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (Vienna, 1975), I, chronicle 8, p. 83; *Liber iurium reipublicae Genuensis*, ed. H. Ricottius, *Monumenta historiae patriae*, IX (Turin, 1872), no. 203; T. Belgrano, *Documenti riguardanti la colonia genovese di Pera* (Genoa, 1888), no. XVI, 124–25; L. Sauli, *Della colonia dei genovesi in Galata*, II (Turin, 1831), 216–22; Heyd, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), I, 503–10; II, 199–200; Nicol, *op. cit.*, 243–44; M. Balard, "A propos de la bataille du Bosphore," *TM*, 4 (1970), 431–69.

<sup>71</sup> Heyd, *op. cit.*, II, 201–2. The Byzantines do not seem to have had a presence in Tana or the Sea of Azov, at least as far as one can see from the accounts of the notary Moreto Bon: *Moreto Bon, notaio in Venezia, Trebisonda e Tana (1403–1408)*, ed. S. de' Colli (Venice, 1963). On Venetian complaints about the arbitrary actions of the Genoese, see Thomas, *Diplomatarium* (*supra*, note 35), II (Venice, 1899), no. 31 (1359–60). On Venice in the Black Sea, cf. M. Nystazopoulou-Pélékidis, "Venise et la mer noire du XI<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Θησαυρίσματα*, 7 (1970), 15–51.

<sup>72</sup> G. Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360–61)* (Bordighera, 1971).

<sup>73</sup> E. A. Zachariadou, "The Conquest of Adrianople by the Turks," *Studi Veneziani*, 12 (1970), 211–17.

especially) in the small, flat-bottomed boats (*cigute*) that were usual in the Danube delta. Like everyone else, they financed their enterprises mostly through the use of exchange contracts. Their activities were limited to the Black Sea area and to Pera. Like the Armenians and the Italians mentioned in the documentation, these Greek traders fed Genoese commerce through the colony at Pera. From there, some of the commodities reached Genoa.<sup>74</sup> This final stage of the commercial activity, however, does not show in the sources, and in any case few Greeks could have participated in it.

The enterprises of the Black Sea Greeks are characterized by their small size and their variety. As an example one may take some Greeks from Kerasous. Five of them together owned 10.5 carats of one half of a *ciguta*; the other half was owned by an Italian from Savona, who was also the captain. The Greeks were, presumably, sailors on this boat and also owned some shares in it, a procedure usual among the Genoese.<sup>75</sup> The boat was loading grain to be carried to Pera. The Greeks made two exchange contracts, one with a Greek merchant of Chilia, to be repaid at 130 *hyperpyra*, and the other with a man from Cembalo, living in Chilia, to be repaid at 65 *hyperpyra*. Presumably, they would use this money to buy grain and thus repay both the capital and the (concealed) interest; the repayment was to take place in Pera. That this kind of transaction was usual may be seen from the fact that in March 1361 two of these men paid to a Genoese citizen (through his representative, a notary from Pera) 220 *hyperpyra* for a loan contracted in December 1360.<sup>76</sup> A similar example is provided by the activities of Iane (Ioannes) Coschina, a Greek from Chilia. He was involved in three different transactions. Two were exchange contracts to be repaid in Pera at a total value of 165 *hyperpyra*. He also received some money from a Genoese man, in prepayment of a load of wax, delivery of which was promised by May 1361. He was also owner of a *ciguta*.<sup>77</sup>

The other Greeks in Chilia made contracts, interesting in varying degrees, which show them to have been quite incorporated in the economic life of the area. One inhabitant of Chilia promised to sell to a rather wealthy Armenian merchant some wax, for which the Greek received payment in advance, as was usual. Two inhabitants of Chilia, of whom one was a *censarius* (middleman), formed a company which engaged in the grain trade. An artisan from Trebizond made an exchange contract with a Genoese from Pera, with capital and profit estimated at 22.3 gold *hyperpyra*. A Greek from Mesembria, son of a priest, loaded a modest amount of grain (157 *modii* of Constantinople) on a ship with an Italian captain which was to sail to the Bulgarian ports of Mesembria, Sozopolis, or Gatopolis

<sup>74</sup> Balard, "Les génois" (*supra*, note 29), *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Pistarino, *Notai*, nos. 17, 18, 21, 22, 26. Another boat was owned in part by a baker from Maocastro (Triandafollo Goto), and partly by a Greek from the same city named Michele di Rocco, who was also captain of the ship. The ship was bound for Constantinople with a cargo of grain, a small quantity of which (25.5 *modii*) belonged to a man from Constantinople: *ibid.*, nos. 32 and 37. The partial ownership of boats by sailors is, of course, a practice long known to the Byzantines, as may be seen from the Rhodian Sea Law: *Legis Rhodiae pars secunda*, chap. 10, in *Basilicorum libri LX*, ed. H. J. Scheltens and N. Van der Wal (Gravenhage, 1974), VII, p. 2471, in which the shipmaster and the sailors seem to own the ship together.

<sup>76</sup> Pistarino, *Notai*, nos. 21 and 22. Note that the loan is paid in *hyperpyra* in Chilia, whereas the usual exchange contract would have required payment to be made in Pera if the money had been borrowed in Chilia; perhaps this is a dry exchange contract.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 8, 18, and 28.

(Agathopolis). He seems to have financed the purchase of this wheat by an exchange contract with the same Italian. Finally, a Greek monk ("Giossafa Tovasilico Caloiatos" or "Caloianno"), of the monastery of St. Athanasia, was master of a ship (*lignum de orlo*) which sailed to Pera; in order to get his ship ready, he borrowed some money from two Italians (one an inhabitant of Pera), in a simple loan and an exchange transaction; in the second case, the money to be repaid in Pera consisted of 306.25 gold *hyperpyra*.

The Greeks from the Byzantine Empire are represented by a few men from Constantinople, Pera, and Adrianople. The very presence of these people in Chilia indicates that in the Byzantine Empire there was still capital and merchants adventurous enough to find their way to the Danube delta. Thus, on 13 April 1361, two Greeks from Constantinople had lent some money to a Genoese in an exchange contract; their representative, a citizen of Pera, collected in Chilia on May 7 (25 days after the contract had been made) 100 gold *hyperpyra*. Another Constantinopolitan, George "Rondachino," lent some money to a Venetian shipmaster and expected to be repaid in Pera at 186 *hyperpyra* and 21 carats of gold. The boat was carrying grain to Pera. It must be noted that all of these transactions have Pera, not Constantinople, as their destination. Finally, there is a man named Theodoro Agallo from Constantinople, a wine merchant; he brought to Chilia 20 *botti* of Greek wine and was able to use it as guarantee to borrow some money from a Genoese.<sup>78</sup>

The people with the most capital among the Greeks, and perhaps in the entire file, were two men from Adrianople, Iane Vassilikos and Iane Frangopoulos. They came from Adrianople to Chilia to place their capital. In all, there are ten documents that concern contracts made by these two Greeks.<sup>79</sup> They were partners, making all except one of their contracts together and splitting the profits. Each appointed the other his plenipotentiary in commercial and financial matters with the power to make contracts, to receive repayment of debts, to act in court, and so on. They placed their money in a variety of ventures, as did many people in that period, in order to spread the risk. Within fifteen days (April 26 to May 10) they made six contracts in which they both participated; Frangopoulos also made one on his own. The total sum which they invested is unknown, but the sum they expected to receive when the investment was paid off (that is, the combined capital and profit) was 1,664.5 gold *hyperpyra* of Pera, and ten *sommi* and twenty *saggi* of silver at the weight of Caffa. Frangopoulos also expected to receive 150 gold *hyperpyra* from his separate investment. It is clear that these two Greeks disposed of considerable capital.

They invested most of their capital in exchange contracts. There is only one simple loan, to a Genoese who acted both in his own name and in that of Constantine Mamali, a Greek from Constantinople, owner of a boat (*lignum*) which was expected to come from Pera and take a cargo of grain. Frangopoulos and Vassilikos loaned these men ten *sommi* and twenty *saggi* of silver to be repaid in thirty-five days, or as soon as the ship came from Pera. The money was to be used to finance

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 25, 3, 4, 24, 62, 63, 72, 80, 73, 88, and 94.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 47, 58, 48, 59, 66, 67, 83, 89, and 90.

the purchase of grain.<sup>80</sup> All the rest of the capital of these two men was placed in exchange contracts: the loans were made in *sommi* of silver, to be repaid in Pera in gold *hyperpyra*. As usual, the rate of exchange was not mentioned, since it concealed the interest. As for the borrowers, these were all shareholders and/or captains of ships. Given that the main item of trade in Chilia was grain, it is probable that this money was used in one way or another to finance the purchase or transport of this commodity. Most of the borrowers were citizens of Genoa or Pera; one was a Venetian, and one (Teocari) seems to have been a Greek living in Pera.<sup>81</sup> The exchange contracts were nominally, at least, to be fulfilled in Pera—nominally because it was possible for another contract to be made later, through which the money would be repaid in Chilia in the local currency, thus changing the transaction into a dry exchange contract.

A few interesting conclusions emerge from these documents. The Greeks, whether from the Black Sea area or from the Byzantine Empire, seem integrated in the economic life of Chilia. They own ships, transport grain, and invest money, sometimes in large quantities. But it is equally clear that the Greeks who participated in the Black Sea trade, whether as sailors, as traveling merchants, or as investors, carried out their transactions in an economy controlled by the Italians: the form of the contracts is Italian; the main commodity is designed for Italian markets; and the repayment of contracts is made in the Italian, not the Byzantine part of Constantinople.<sup>82</sup>

It may be objected that the above remarks merely describe a situation deformed by the nature of the sources: that, indeed, it must be expected that the Genoese notarial accounts would only include those Greeks, or those of their activities, which were incorporated in the Italian financial and commercial system. While such a comment would have undoubted validity with respect to its immediate object, it would not at all invalidate the conclusions drawn from the Italian sources. For the surviving Byzantine documentary material, as well as the information given in the narrative sources, confirms the general picture which emerges from the Italian notarial accounts and which is latent in the texts of treaties between the Byzantine Empire and the Italian maritime states.

The extant Byzantine commercial documents are limited in time and place. With the exception of a sea loan contracted in Constantinople in 1363 or 1364,<sup>83</sup> the rest are all dated to the last years of the fourteenth century and the first years of the fifteenth and are concentrated in Constantinople. They are connected with claims which arose out of commercial transactions and which were brought to the patriarchal court of Constantinople. By their very nature, therefore, they

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 47 and 48.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 66.

<sup>82</sup> There is an interesting case (*ibid.*, no. 66) in which the ship is sailing to Constantinople, but the financial transaction will be finalized in Pera.

<sup>83</sup> G. Ferrari delle Spade, "Registro Vaticano di atti bizantini di diritto privato," *SBN*, 4 (1935), no. 3. The interest rate allowed for sea loans in the Byzantine Empire was 12%. But in Thessalonica in the early 15th century an interest rate of 20% had become usual. When the city came under Venetian occupation, the Venetians objected to this high rate and reduced it to 15%. But, at the request of the inhabitants, the Venetian Senate agreed to recognize all contracts made before this new arrangement. See K. D. Mertziotis, *Μνημεία Μακεδονικῆς Ἱστορίας* (Thessalonica, 1947), 55–56 (1425).

can only concern a small fraction of the merchants and investors; nevertheless, they provide us with a glimpse—little more than that—of the trading activities in which these people were involved.

In these documents, as in the Genoese documents from Chilia and as, later, in the accounts of Badoer, we find Greeks forming partnerships both for trade and for other activities. When these partnerships are given a name, they are called *syntrophiai*, which seems to be a translation of *societas* or *compagnia*.<sup>84</sup> The term *syntrophia* is used indiscriminately to describe partnerships made to conduct business in the city of Constantinople (in the West, such partnerships would be in the form of a *societas terrae*) as well as partnerships whose object was maritime trade, and which in the West would be covered by a *commenda* or *colleganza* contract. In the first instance, there are *syntrophiai* formed for the purpose of buying or operating shops: in one case, a *syntrophia* operates a bakery; one of the partners contributes the shop and a horse, while the other one contributes his personal labor and thirty *hyperpyra*.<sup>85</sup> In another case, a woman forms a *syntrophia* with her godson to run a dairy shop. She contributes the shop, all the utensils, and whatever is necessary for the operation, while he contributes his labor; they will share the profits equally.<sup>86</sup>

Where trading ventures are concerned, the capital is larger than in the cases just described, the persons involved are important, and the form of investment more standard. Many of the people involved are members of the Byzantine aristocracy and are described as *oikeioi* of the Emperor. The money is usually invested in contracts resembling the *commenda*, whether the term *syntrophia* is used or not. Perhaps the most interesting case is that of a man named Manuel Koresis, who brought suit against the *oikeios* of the Emperor, Georgios Goudelis.<sup>87</sup> They apparently had formed at least one partnership a few years before 1401. That was dissolved, and in the spring of 1400 they formed a new one. There was a written contract which has not survived but whose terms may be reconstructed from the decision of the patriarchal court. The combined capital was 3,600 *hyperpyra*, with the traveling partner, Koresis, contributing 1000 *hyperpyra* (27 percent) and expecting half the profit. The partnership was to last for approximately six months (to October 1400). After that date, the investor, Goudelis, was to recover his investment without sharing in the expenses or risks involved in the transactions. So far, this is a fairly typical bilateral *commenda*, with time limitation; perhaps the area in which the trading activity was to take place was also specified. The agreement concerning liability is less easy to detect from the surviving evidence. It was agreed that, as long as the partnership lasted, both the investor and the agent (the traveling partner) were liable for losses, but it is not stated whether the loss was to be reckoned proportionately to the capital invested by each (this

<sup>84</sup> The Byzantine terms *chreokoinonia* or *koinonia* are not used: cf. *Legis Rhodiae* (*supra*, note 75), chap. 17, p. 2473; *Ecloga*, in Zepos, *Jus*, chap. 10, 5; cf. C. Harmenopuli, *Manuale legum sive Hexabiblos* (Leipzig, 1851), lib. III, tit. X, ch. 8, which provides for a *koinonia* in which one of the partners contributes only his labor. On the presumed Byzantine or Muslim origins of the *commenda*, cf. R. S. Lopez, "The Role of Trade in the Economic Readjustment of Byzantium in the Seventh Century," *DOP*, 13 (1959), 67–85; and A. L. Udovitch, "At the Origins of the Western *Commenda*: Islam, Israel, Byzantium?," *Speculum*, 37 (1962), 198–207.

<sup>85</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 44), II, 474–75.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 474–75.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 546–50 (October 1401).

would be the Italian way) or in the same proportion as the expected profit (which would be the way described in the *Rhodian Sea Law*).<sup>88</sup> Finally, it should be noted that Koresis had formed other partnerships as well and was traveling with money invested by a number of people—another typical feature of Mediterranean trade in this period.

The fate of this partnership is instructive, both with respect to the conditions of Black Sea trade in the early 1400's and with respect to the mentality and legal recourse of the Byzantine traders. Koresis went to Amisos, Sinope, and other Black Sea ports in the summer of 1400 but found that he could not engage in trade except in a very limited way because of the confusion that resulted from Timurlane's invasions. Whatever merchandise he could buy he sent to Pera in his father's name in mid-August; but the ship was lost in a storm. Koresis himself remained in those parts, carried out his transactions, and returned in the spring of 1401. Goudelis then took him to court, asking that Koresis absorb all the loss in the case of the shipwreck, since it was not written in the agreement that merchandise could be sent in the absence of the agent. Goudelis also asked that the merchandise in the warehouse at Pera be divided "according to the capital contributed by each one" (two thirds/one third), i.e., according to Italian usage. The second request was granted, and it was primarily with the first one that the patriarchal court was involved. It ruled that, since the original agreement did not forbid the agent to send the merchandise to Constantinople by sea, Koresis was simply making use of his full power to deal with the money entrusted to him as best he could; therefore, the loss involved in the shipwreck should be shared and not borne only by the agent. Goudelis then asked that, since the agreement had lapsed in October 1400, his capital should not share in the possible losses and expenses incurred by Koresis after that date. The court here ruled that, since Goudelis expected to share any profits realized after October 1400, he should also share the possible losses—especially since the original agreement was silent on that specific point.<sup>89</sup> But the expenses should be borne by Koresis alone. Finally, since Goudelis raised the point that he could not be certain whether what was stored in Pera was the entire merchandise, Manuel Koresis and his father were to bring to court the customs receipts and were to swear to the truth of their statements on pain of excommunication. The same penalty was to strike any one of the partners who did not abide by the decision!

Similar agreements, in written form, were made by other Greeks from Constantinople.<sup>90</sup> The dangers attending trade at this time made such agreements

<sup>88</sup> *Legis Rhodiae*, chap. 17, p. 2473: 'Εάν δὲ τοῦ χρόνου τῶν συνθηκῶν μὴ πληρωθέντος συμβῇ τὸν κατὰ θάλασσαν κίνδυνον ἀπώλειαν γενέσθαι, καθάπερ τοῦ κέρδους ἔδοξε καὶ τὰς λιμῆας πρὸς τὰ μέρη κατὰ τὰς συνθήκας ἀναδέχεσθαι. Cf. R. S. Lopez and I. W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York, n.d.), 175; and G. Astuti, *Origine e svolgimento storico della commenda fino al secolo XIII* (Turin, 1933); also E. H. Byrne, "Commercial Contracts of the Genoese in the Syrian Trade of the Twelfth Century," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 31 (1917), 128–70.

<sup>89</sup> A provision that would seem to support Goudelis' point is to be found in the *Legis Rhodiae*, chap. 17, p. 2473: 'Εάν τις δώσει ἐπὶ χρεῖα κοινωνίας χρυσίον ἢ ἀργύριον . . . ἐὰν ὁ λαμβάνων τὸ χρυσίον . . . πληρωθέντος τοῦ χρόνου μὴ ἀποστρέψῃ αὐτὸ τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ συμβῇ ἀπὸ πυρός ἢ ληστῶν ἢ ναυαγίου περιπεσεῖν, ἀλίμιον μένειν τὸν κύριον τοῦ χρυσίου καὶ σώα τὰ ἴδια ἀπολαμβάνειν.

<sup>90</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, II, 399–400, 511–12, 550–51, 374–75, 461. The document discussed below is found on pp. 560–61.

particularly risky. Thus, we have the case of a certain kyr Constantine Angelos, who was to travel to Chios with money invested by a number of people. He missed the ship he was to sail on and after a month found another one; but this was eventually captured. One of the investors asked for the restoration of his capital, since he had not authorized travel on the second ship. But the court found that he had known that Angelos was looking for another ship and, furthermore, that one of the other investors (Ioannes Sophianos) had withdrawn his investment when Angelos failed to board the first ship. Therefore, no claim could be pressed against Angelos.

It is, perhaps, useful to recall that at the time these contracts and arrangements were made, Constantinople was being blockaded by the Ottomans in a siege that lasted for eight years, from 1394 until August 1402. It was very difficult for people to leave or enter the city. And yet, a number of Byzantines traveled for trading purposes although their ventures suffered from the difficult conditions.<sup>91</sup> Sometimes they traveled toward the Aegean: Ioannes Goudelis went "εἰς τὰ κάτω μέρη," while kyr Ioannes Angelos sailed to Chios. Others sailed north. Kyr Ioannes Sophianos, who was an *oikeios* of the Emperor, invested some money on the venture to Chios, but he himself went north "εἰς τὸ τῆς Ῥωσίας ταξείδιον."<sup>92</sup>

One of the most striking facts about the Byzantine merchants and investors encountered here is that many of them belong to the highest aristocracy. Thus, Georgios Goudelis was the son-in-law of Anna Asanina Palaiologina, the Emperor's aunt.<sup>93</sup> The lady Theodora Palaiologina entrusted 300 *hyperpyra* in merchandise to Ioannes Goudelis, *oikeios* of the Emperor.<sup>94</sup> Ioannes Sophianos, *oikeios* of the Emperor, may be the same person as, or related to, Caloiani Sofiano, who appears as a banker in the accounts of Giacomo Badoer in the 1430's. Indeed, several of these names reappear in Badoer's accounts: Palaiologos, Argyropoulos (Argiro), Goudelis (Cutela).<sup>95</sup> These aristocrats apparently found it both necessary and profitable to engage in trade, either as active participants, or as investors, or both.

The geographic distribution of the commercial activities of the Byzantines in this period is also intriguing. The sea journeys to the Black Sea coasts and the Aegean are to be expected. More tantalizing is the departure of John Sophianos "to the journey to Russia"; the terms in which this is described suggest that this route to Russia was a common one. The reference may simply be to a sea journey to the northern coasts of the Black Sea; but it could also possibly indicate a land route to southern Russia. Equally intriguing are two indications of trade connections between the Byzantines and Wallachia. A merchant named Ioannes Mamalis, who died *ca.* 1400, had had in his possession "furs from Vlachia," which he had promised as a guarantee to Andreas Argyropoulos when they formed a *syntrophia*.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 372-74, 560-61.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 511-12, 385.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 361-66.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 399-400, 511-12, 550-51.

<sup>95</sup> Badoer (*supra*, note 7), 108, 40, 234, 258, 120, 6, 114, 236, 246, and *passim*. Some names appear in Constantinople in 1400 and in Chilia in 1361: thus, we have Iane Mamalioti and "Constancius Mamali de Constantinopoli grecus" (Pistarino, *Notai* [*supra*, note 72], nos. 21, 47, 48), and Theodore and Ioannes Mamalis (Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, II, 374-75). A Mamoli appears among the "small nobles" of Thessalonica in 1425: Mertzios, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 84), 50-52.

<sup>96</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, II, 374-75.

The terms of their agreement have not been preserved. But normally the guarantee would be given by the traveling partner of such a partnership; and it is not far-fetched to suggest that Mamalis' projected journey would also be to "Vlachia." That the Argyropoulos family, a rich and aristocratic one, had connections with Wallachia is known from another source. The satirist Mazaris, writing in the early fifteenth century, mentions a Polos Argyros (who may be identified with our Andreas Argyropoulos) and claims that he had returned from Vlachia with great wealth; indeed, Vlachia was, according to Mazaris, a place where many Greeks went to make money fast.<sup>97</sup> Further research may uncover economic connections between Greek merchants and the Balkan hinterland, or the Danubian lands, and even Russia.

Although the contracts and arrangements discussed here were made exclusively between Byzantines, there is clear evidence of the influence of the Italians and of the economic and institutional conditions they had created in the area. The contracts are very similar to those usual in Italy, and even the term *syntrophia* seems to be translated from the words *societas* or *compagnia*. It is interesting that the court case between George Goudelis and Koresis was resolved according to Italian, and not Byzantine, commercial law. It is also significant that, at least in this particular case, Byzantine merchants unloaded their merchandise in Pera, not in Constantinople, presumably paying customs dues to the Genoese.

There were, however, important differences between Byzantine and Italian merchants. Apart from the fact that, as can also be seen from the accounts of Badoer, the Byzantines were involved only in retail trade and not in large-scale activities, it should be noted that the institutional framework in which they worked was different from that of the Italians. The fact that commercial cases were tried in ecclesiastical courts is in itself a significant difference. What this meant in practical terms can be seen in a case tried in March 1400. Thomas Kalokyres sued Constantine Perdikaes for 250 *hyperpyra* still due to him from a *syntrophia* and for another 250 *hyperpyra* which he had given Perdikaes, presumably in a simple loan. The case was brought to a patriarchal court, not for the first time, since the same court had already issued a decision a few months earlier. In March, Perdikaes claimed that the only outstanding debt was part of the 250 *hyperpyra* from the *syntrophia* and asked that the money he had paid out as interest be counted against capital. The court agreed that all interest paid out, and anything else given to Kalokyres from the *syntrophia*, should be counted against capital, and Kalokyres had to be content with that. The court then decided, for reasons of charity, to reduce the remaining debt by 15 *hyperpyra*.<sup>98</sup> It must, of course, be

<sup>97</sup> Ἐπιτομή Μάζαρι ἐν Ἀΐδου, in J. Fr. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regiis*, III (Paris, 1831), 145, 156–57; cf. M. Treu, "Mazaris und Holobolos," *BZ*, 1 (1892), 88–89. On Andreas Argyropoulos, cf. *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, I (Vienna, 1976), no. 1255. People named Argyropouloi had a large truck garden outside Thessalonica in the early 15th century; they made improvements in it and managed it in a very profitable way: F. Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern des Heiligen Berges* (Munich, 1948), nos. 24 and 102 (1421). On 23 July 1425, the Venetian Senate, at the request of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, raised the monthly salaries paid to "certi gentilhomeni e gentilhomeni piccoli," who formed the guard of the city. Among those who had their salaries raised from 70 to 100 *aspres* were Argyropoulos, Mamoli, Constantinos Argyropoulos, and Ioannes Melachrinos, son of Georgios Argyropoulos, while Demetrios Argyropoulos would receive 20 *aspres* per month in addition to his salary: Mertzius, *op. cit.*, 50–52; cf. Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), II, no. 1995.

<sup>98</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, II, 372–74.

remembered that these were difficult and abnormal times, as Perdikares claimed; also, that the lender accepted a compromise, probably because he knew that Perdikares could not pay off the entire debt. Nevertheless, it is important that Byzantine merchants functioned in conditions where noneconomic factors intruded heavily on otherwise normal financial transactions.

The patterns established above for Byzantine merchants in Constantinople hold true generally for the first half of the fifteenth century. The city of Constantinople, despite the several catastrophes which had befallen the Byzantine Empire, was still one of the great commercial centers of the Levant. Foreign visitors were usually struck by the fact that the city no longer had its former magnificence or its impressive population; Pero Tafur was only one of many who found "the inhabitants...not well clad, but sad and poor, showing the hardship of their lot..." Nevertheless, virtually all the travelers also mention that the city had a good harbor, which was regularly full of galleys and other ships, while the most populous quarter was the one along the Golden Horn, facing Pera. Here, wrote Clavijo who had seen it in 1403, "there are innumerable warehouses and shops for the sale of all sorts of goods. Hither the traders bring and store the merchandise that comes in from overseas." Thirty years later, Bertrandon de la Broquière still saw many foreign merchants in Constantinople and realized that the Venetians were supreme here, as the Genoese were in Pera.<sup>99</sup> Although both for Venice and for Genoa the city did not occupy the first place in their eastern trade, it was an important market for Western goods and a place where the alimentary products and raw materials of the East and a few spices could be purchased. Venetian and Genoese agents bought here the products of Asia Minor, the Balkans, and the Black Sea area, reexported them to Europe, and imported cloth, as in the past.<sup>100</sup> This trade was substantial. The accounts of Giacomo Badoer show an annual turnover of 26,000 ducats (67,000 *hyperpyra*), and he was only one of the Venetian men of affairs, and not an exceptionally great one.<sup>101</sup>

The participation of the Greeks in this trade is visible through the accounts of Badoer.<sup>102</sup> In terms of numbers, the Greeks are the largest single group of merchants: twenty-seven percent when one eliminates those from the Venetian colonies. But in terms of value of transactions, their participation is disproportionately small, being twenty-five percent of the value of goods purchased, and only nine and a half percent of the value of goods sold to Badoer.<sup>103</sup> The point here is clear:

<sup>99</sup> Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-06*, trans. G. Le Strange (New York-London, 1928), 88-89; Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435-1439*, trans. M. Letts (London, 1926), 146; *Le voyage d'Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière*, ed. C. Schefer (Paris, 1892), 141-69, esp. 153 and 164; *Chr. Buondelmonti, florentini Librum insularum archipelagi*, ed. G. R. L. de Sinner (Leipzig-Berlin, 1824), 124-25; cf. J. Ebersolt, *Constantinople et les voyageurs du Levant* (Paris, 1919), 45ff.; and A. M. Schneider, "Die Bevölkerung Konstantinopels im XV. Jahrhundert," *NachrGött, Philol.-hist.Kl.* (1949), 233-37.

<sup>100</sup> Thiriet, *Romanie* (*supra*, note 5), 419-28; Heers, *Gênes* (*supra*, note 5), 379-85, stresses the decline in importance of Constantinople and Pera; Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj" (*supra*, note 22), 48-52, stresses the importance of the city. Cf. F. C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418-1449* (Baltimore, 1944).

<sup>101</sup> Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj," 51-52; a slightly different figure is given by T. Bertelé, "Il giro d'affari di Giacomo Badoer: Precisazioni i deduzioni," *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses* (Munich, 1960), 48-57.

<sup>102</sup> Badoer's text has been studied thoroughly by Šitikov and lately by Oikonomides, *op. cit.* (*supra*, ed. note \*). I have used Šitikov's study extensively, adding a few comments of my own.

<sup>103</sup> Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj," Table 1, p. 53.

the Greek trade with the westerners is a deficit one, and the Constantinopolitan market has become a market of consumption of foreign goods, primarily cloth. For the Venetians and, especially, for the Genoese, on the other hand, the trade was quite profitable.

The Byzantine Greeks who engaged in trade (I am excluding the Cretans and the people from Negroponte) were primarily involved in retail sales. They bought cloth and sold skins, wax, wool, grain, some raw silk. They formed companies, usually with small capital, and their activities were limited to Constantinople and its environs, although one man made the journey to Brusa, then a significant center of the Levantine trade.<sup>104</sup> More interesting, in some ways, are the bankers. Three out of the ten bankers mentioned in Badoer's accounts are Greek: "Caloiani Sofiano," "Caloiani Sardino" (Sarandenos), and "Costantin Critopulo."<sup>105</sup> The richest of them, Sophianos, had a turnover of 10,751 *hyperpyra*, which makes him comparable to all but two of the Western bankers who appear in Badoer's books. The importance of bankers, as opposed to traders, is one further proof of the dependent nature of the Byzantine economy, for its capital could not be profitably invested in a commercial activity that was controlled by others; it was easier and perhaps more profitable to engage in money transactions.

As in the first years of the fifteenth century, so now the presence of aristocratic Greek names is surprisingly strong. Among the traders we find Andrea and "Sebastian" Argiro, a Synadenos, a Laskaris, a Vatatzes, a Filomatis, a Tagaris, Demetrios Palaiologos, a Kantakouzenos, the Grand Duke Lucas Notaras, and the *commercarius* Demetrius Notaras.<sup>106</sup> The latter, together with another imperial official, Constantine "Paleologo," "kefale" of Agathopolis on the Black Sea coast, sold Badoer grain and honey in relatively large quantities.<sup>107</sup> It is also interesting that there are families which had been engaged in trade and connected with the Italians for generations. Apart from the Argyropouloi, we find here a Sophianos, who appears also in the Greek documents of 1400, while the names Frangopoulos, Sarandinos, and Vassilikos may be found in Chilia in the early 1360's as well as in the accounts of Badoer.<sup>108</sup> The prosopography of the Byzantine merchants and bankers remains to be established. Nevertheless, it is evident that the connections between Italian merchants and Greek merchants and aristocrats were close and long-standing; perhaps this closeness may be symbolically represented by Clavijo's description: "The trading quarter of the city is down by the gates which open on the strand (of the Golden Horn) and which are facing the opposite gates which pertain to the city of Pera: for it is here that the galleys and smaller vessels come to port to discharge their cargoes: and here by the strand is it that the people of Pera meet those of Constantinople and transact their business and commerce."<sup>109</sup>

The presence of the Byzantine aristocracy among the merchants and bankers of Constantinople in the last years of its existence as a Byzantine city serves as

<sup>104</sup> Badoer (*supra*, note 7), p. 74.

<sup>105</sup> Badoer, *passim*; and Šitikov, "Konstantinopolj," Table 2, p. 55.

<sup>106</sup> Badoer, *passim*, especially pp. 59, 68, 74, 108-9, 148, 202, 135, 221, 262, 249, 280, and 285.

<sup>107</sup> Badoer, 109, 148, 285.

<sup>108</sup> Badoer, *passim*, especially pp. 7, 29, 59; and *supra*, pp. 197-98.

<sup>109</sup> Clavijo, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 99), 88.

a reminder of the complexity of the social and economic development of the late Empire. That the Byzantine state was at this time virtually nonexistent economically and politically is almost a cliché. But the same conditions which spelled its demise created a situation favorable for specific social groups. In the fourteenth century, the Byzantine aristocracy was rich in lands and revenues from land.<sup>110</sup> In the first half of the fifteenth, there was in Constantinople a merchant and banker class which had capital, sometimes in considerable amounts, and which invested and multiplied it in the Italian-dominated markets. It is not surprising, then, that the Venetian observer of the fall of Constantinople, Niccolò Barbaro, should note that there were in the city men of great property who did not use their money to provide for its defense; nor is it surprising that Lucas Notaras, unjustly famed for his supposed preference of the Turkish turban over the Latin tiara, should have vast amounts of treasure to offer Mehmed II for his life; or that the bulk of this money should have been in Italy.<sup>111</sup> Constantinople was a city of contradictions at this time: a relatively small city, with the bulk of its inhabitants impoverished, but with a wealthy minority linked to the Italian trade.<sup>112</sup>

The Byzantine merchant is not to be sought merely in Constantinople and on the Black Sea coasts. On the contrary, there is sufficient evidence to posit the existence of an active commercial life in the provinces, although many of the details are still hidden in obscurity. Byzantine merchants are evident throughout the Palaeologan period; the most active provincial trade centers are Thessalonica, the Despotate of the Morea, especially Monemvasia, and, in Epirus, Janina and Arta.<sup>113</sup> The evidence is, unfortunately, extremely fragmented. Nevertheless, it is possible to reach a first approximation concerning the activities of these provincial traders.

A list of complaints, presented by the Byzantines to the Venetian government in 1319, shows that there were a number of merchants active in Mistra, Movem-

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Ostrogorsky, "Aristocracy" (*supra*, note 4), *passim*; and Laiou, "Aristocracy" (*supra*, note 4), *passim*.

<sup>111</sup> Georgios Sphrantzes, *Memorii 1401-1477*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1966), 433-34; *Laonici Chalcocondylae Historiarum demonstrationes*, ed. E. Darkó, II (Budapest, 1923), 165-66; *Ducas Istoria Turco-Bizantina (1341-1462)*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1958), 329; Niccolò Barbaro, *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople*, trans. J. R. Jones (New York, 1969), 76. One "gentleman" was relieved of 30,000 ducats by the Turks; he may have been Lucas Notaras.

<sup>112</sup> Thus, in the late 14th century, Demetrius Cydones feared both that poverty would soon be extended to the rich and that the misery of the poor of Constantinople would lead to civil war: *Démétrius Cydonès, Correspondance*, ed. R.-J. Loenertz, II (Vatican City, 1960), letters nos. 442 (1391) and 433 (1391).

<sup>113</sup> As earlier, I am leaving out of consideration the merchants who came from areas that had been under extended Venetian, Genoese, or other Western occupation, such as Chios, Crete, Negroponte, Rhodes, etc. The reason for this exclusion is that the development of these areas is very different from that of the "Byzantine" mainland and that the traders and shipmasters and sailors of these lands operated under different conditions, which merit a separate examination. It should be noted that, in the first half of the 15th century, the commercial activity of the Greek inhabitants of the Venetian colonies increased: Thiriet, *Romanie* (*supra*, note 5), 420.

In the course of the 14th and 15th centuries, most Byzantine possessions acquired different masters: Western, Serbian, or Ottoman. In such cases, it would be pedantic and formalistic to exclude the traders of these areas, as long as conquest did not bring with it a profound change in the economic structure of the area or the activities of the inhabitants. Thus, it would serve no realistic purpose to exclude the merchants of Thessalonica for those periods in which the city was under Ottoman or Venetian control, and it would be absurd to stop discussing the merchants of Arta in the late 14th century, when the city fell under the suzerainty of the Tocchi of Cephalonia.

vasia and its environs, and Thessalonica, as well as in Constantinople. These people had had their merchandise and, occasionally, their boats captured by the Venetians. The sums for which they requested reparations and which represent the value of their merchandise are often very high, even allowing for the inflation which is inevitable in this kind of source. Merchants from Thessalonica and Constantinople claimed losses of 10,000 *hyperpyra*; some people from Mistra lost 4,000 *hyperpyra*, while a man called Maurosumi, from Monemvasia, claimed a loss of 2,200 *hyperpyra* in cloth, oil, cash, and arms.<sup>114</sup> In all, 29,300 *hyperpyra* were requested as reparations.

The activities of the merchants mentioned in this list were concentrated in the Aegean Sea. But there is mention of one man who was involved in long-distance trade, a certain Sophonias Atheneas; "homo...imperatoris," he had traveled to Alexandria, presumably for spices, and on the return journey went to Crete. He gave to a Venetian merchandise worth 150 *hyperpyra*, in a sea loan or *commenda* contract; then, he was detained in Crete, lost his investment, and demanded reparations.

Among these Greeks, the Monemvasiots appear as a particularly significant category. Other sources indicate that Monemvasia was a very important trading city throughout the fourteenth century and that its merchants traveled in the Byzantine Empire and the Black Sea trading in all sorts of commodities. Two of these traders appear in the Genoese notarial documents from late thirteenth-century Caffa, while in 1309 a galley from Monemvasia (it is not clear whether its occupants were merchants, pirates, or both) was pursued by sailors from Coron and brought to Crete.<sup>115</sup> The importance of the Monemvasiot merchants is illustrated by the various chrysobulls and silver-sealed documents granted them by Byzantine emperors and despots of the Morea.

The chrysobull of Andronicus II (1284), renewing privileges granted to the Monemvasiots by Michael VIII, exempts them from taxes on their landed properties and from paying the *commercium* on their transactions within Monemvasia itself. In 1328, a *prostagma* of Andronicus III renewed the privileges given by Andronicus II to the Monemvasiots who had abandoned their city when it fell under Frankish occupation (1248) and had settled in Pegai in Asia Minor. These merchants were to pay a *commercium* of two percent in Constantinople, Heraclea, Selymbria, Rodosto, Gallipoli, Ainos, and all other coastal cities of Thrace, whereas they would pay no duty at all in the other parts of the Byzantine Empire. Those who bought or sold grain, animals, or anything else from the Monemvasiot merchants were also relieved from the *commercium*.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium* (*supra*, note 35), I, no. 72 (1319). The events described in this list range in time from December 1313 to 1316, with the greatest concentration in 1316.

<sup>115</sup> Balard, *Gênes* (*supra*, note 9), no. 438 (1290): "Nicolaus de Marvasia" buys fish; no. 529 (1290): Michael "Marvasiatus" sells in Caffa merchandise to two Greeks who will pay him in Pera. For 1309, cf. Thiriet, *Délibérations* (*supra*, note 5), I, no. 187.

<sup>116</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 44), V, 154–55, 165–68; Sphrantzes, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 111), 538–42. Cf. St. Binon, "L'histoire et la légende de deux chrysobulles d'Andronic II en faveur de Monembasie," *EO*, 37 (1938), 274–311; and E. Francès, "La féodalité et les villes byzantines au XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Byzantinoslavica*, 16 (1955), 76–96. For the date and authenticity of the chrysobull of 1316, see F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches*, IV (Munich–Berlin, 1960), no. 2383. He thinks that the chrysobull was a forgery by the metropolitan of Monemvasia, Makarios, who, however, had before

For the merchants of Monemvasia itself, there is a chrysobull whose date and authenticity have long been disputed. The text of the "chrysobull" is given by Makarios Melissenos, the author of the *Chronicon Maius*. This text reproduces, to a large extent, that of the *prostagma* of Andronicus III but adds that the privileges are granted to the Monemvasiots of Pegai *and of Monemvasia*, who are settled in Constantinople or in other cities of the Empire. The "chrysobull" states that the *commercium* in Constantinople and in the Thracian cities is lowered to one percent and is entirely abolished in the Peloponnese. P. Schreiner considers that the chrysobull is a fabrication based on the text of the *prostagma*. However, his argumentation is not conclusive. The "chrysobull" presents certain new elements, specifically some taxes which are absent from the text of the *prostagma*. It also mentions the activities of the merchants of Monemvasia in cities like Zagora, Sozopolis, Agathopolis, Medeia, activities which do not appear in the *prostagma* and which Melissenos had no compelling reason to add. It is, still, probable that Melissenos copied (perhaps with some changes, intentional or not) an authentic chrysobull which had been based on the text of the *prostagma* of Andronicus III (therefore, to be dated after 1328 and within the reign of this emperor) and which gave the merchants of Monemvasia the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Monemvasiots of Pegai.

If the chrysobull is accepted as basically genuine, it provides an interesting picture of the trading activities of the Monemvasiots in this period. A first observation is that the Monemvasiots traveled widely within the Byzantine Empire. Some of them resided in Constantinople as well as in other cities. They traded in the capital, in Selymbria, in Heracleia, Rodosto, Gallipoli, and "other Macedonian (=Thracian) cities." They sailed in the Black Sea and the Aegean, bringing merchandise to Constantinople. They also crossed the Black Sea along the east-west axis. And they engaged in trade by land, for they carried cattle or other merchandise from Zagora to Sozopolis, Medeia, or Agathopolis.<sup>117</sup> They were active in the Peloponnese itself, especially in the various fairs that were held there. According to the chrysobull, the products they bought and sold were grain, oil, salted meat, skins, cloth, linen, and cattle.

The Monemvasiot merchants apparently made good use of the privileges granted to them. In the early 1340's, they traveled to Constantinople regularly, often for trading purposes; some were settled there. They were known as an ancient seafaring people—*ἱκανόπλοον καὶ θαλαττουργόν*, according to Andronicus II—who had once been famed as fighters at sea and who now made their living by trade. On one of their trips to Constantinople, some of these merchants brought their absentee bishop, Isidore, 300 *hyperpyra* from the revenues of his see.<sup>118</sup>

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him an authentic document. The latest word on the subject is by P. Schreiner, "Ein Protagma Andronikos' III. für die Monembasioten in Pegai (1328) und das gefälschte Chrysobull Andronikos' II. für die Monembasioten im byzantinischen Reich," *JÖB*, 27 (1978), 203–28.

<sup>117</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, V, 167.

<sup>118</sup> Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 26), 85–88. For the date (1341–end of 1344), cf. J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1959), 90, 105–6, 109–15. For the reference to Andronicus II, cf. Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, V, 156.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the Greeks of the Despotate of the Morea (among them, no doubt, the Monemvasiots) seem to have had an active trade with the Venetian possessions in the peninsula, and perhaps with Crete. Relations between them and the Venetians were not always friendly. Thus, in 1376, a quarrel arose between Modon and Coron and the Despotate of the Morea, and the Senate instructed the castellans of the two towns to cooperate with Venetian merchants in order to devise further measures against the Greek merchants.<sup>119</sup> According to existing treaties, the Venetians were supposed to allow Greeks to trade in Venetian possessions without paying the *commercium* which was normally exacted from foreign merchants. Still, the Greeks complained that they paid excessive taxes in the Venetian territories, and the issue was important enough to be raised in the negotiations for the renewal of the treaties between Venice and Byzantium in 1362. Later in the century, in 1390, we find the Greek merchants of the Morea selling their merchandise in the Venetian ports of Modon and Coron; the Venetian government, on the other hand, tried to discourage its own merchants from using the ports of the Despotate of the Morea.<sup>120</sup>

The first half of the fifteenth century was a very difficult period for the Despotate of the Morea, primarily because of troubles with the Navarrese, internal conflicts, and, finally, the Ottoman invasions, especially the disastrous one of 1446. Economically, too, the situation must have been unpleasant; even so, Greek merchants continued to be active in trade, probably small-scale, within the Peloponnesus. Their competition with the Venetians became, at times, intense, especially after the Byzantines had recovered the big ports of Clarentza and Patras (1428). In 1430, the Senate imposed a 10 percent tax on silk and cochenille bought in the Despotate of the Morea in an attempt to bring the Greek merchants to Modon and Coron and to stop Venetians going to the Despotate. The measure failed and had to be abrogated a few years later. The Moreot traders also continued to travel to Crete, at least in the early years of the century. In 1405, the Emperor Manuel II included in his peace proposals to Venice a request that Byzantine subjects trading in Crete "should be treated according to existing agreements."<sup>121</sup> Given the geographic limitations of the Empire at this time, it is to be assumed that the Byzantine subjects trading in Crete were primarily from the Peloponnesus.

Internally, the Monemvasiots retained their privileges, paying no customs or other duties throughout the Despotate of the Morea. Within their own city, they paid a *commercium*, but it was to be used only for purposes of self-defense, and especially for the building and upkeep of the city walls.<sup>122</sup>

As in the Peloponnesus, so in Epirus and Thessaly there were Greek merchants who were active both within their own immediate area and outside it. The evidence

<sup>119</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), I, no. 578.

<sup>120</sup> Cessi and Sambin, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), VIII, 46 (August 1324); Thiriet, *Régestes*, I, nos. 342 (1359), 782 (1390), and 237 (1350); Thomas, *Diplomatarium* (*supra*, note 35), II, 84 (1362).

<sup>121</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes*, II, no. 2202 (1430); III, no. 2508 (1439), 2274 (1432), 2679 (1445), and 2948 (1453). Cf. Zakythinos, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 45), I, 152-74, 180ff.; II, 245-70. For 1405, see N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, I (Paris, 1899), 144-46.

<sup>122</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, V, 170-75; Zakythinos, *op. cit.*, I, 214-16.

here is sporadic, and it is not possible to do anything more than signal the existence of such people and describe in broad terms the scope of their activities. The merchants of Janina have long been recognized as a particularly important group, since Andronicus II found it necessary to give them extensive privileges in 1319, when he recovered the city. The inhabitants of Janina were then granted a certain degree of self-government, were guaranteed their traditional freedoms and privileges, and were freed from most taxes. The merchants were released from the obligation of paying the *commercium* on their commercial transactions within Janina and in all other cities and forts of the Byzantine Empire; they could trade freely and without hindrance wherever they wanted, even in Constantinople itself.<sup>123</sup> While these privileges are more extensive than those granted to Monemvasia a few years earlier, it does not necessarily follow that the merchants of Janina were economically more active or more powerful than those of Monemvasia. The blanket privileges are probably due to the political necessity of co-opting the inhabitants who had themselves surrendered the city. And they may also mean that the commercial activities of the people of Janina were primarily geared to Epirus itself and the Balkan peninsula and did not extend very often to Constantinople, whose *commercium* was the one that most interested the Emperor.

It is, indeed, this kind of local trading activity that is dimly visible in the early fifteenth-century "Chronicle of Janina."<sup>124</sup> In its hostility toward the Despot Thomas Preljubovich, this source distinguishes three groups that suffered under his rule. First, there was the Church, whose property was confiscated. Second, members of the aristocracy (τῶν εὐγενεστάτων ἀρχόντων) were exiled or forced to flee. And finally, he moved against the people of the *kastron* (τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ κάστρου), some of whom were very rich, and had their property confiscated. Among the various exactions he imposed were taxes on the sale of wine and various other duties and taxes, which seem to have hit the guilds and the merchants. The "monopoly" he imposed on wine, wheat, meat, cheese, fruit, and fish must have hit both the producers of these commodities and the merchants who, presumably, imported them.<sup>125</sup> Admittedly, the economic evidence given by this otherwise very important source is limited. But the rather precise data concerning alimentary products and the absence of any measures that would tap the wealth of merchants engaged in long-distance trade might argue that Janina was primarily a center of local exchange.

Greeks from both Epirus and the Peloponnesus also appear in Ragusan sources in the first half of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Their place of origin is not easy to determine, for in the documentation the general term "Greek" is used to denote Greeks from all areas of the old Byzantine Empire, including those

<sup>123</sup> Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, V, 77–84; cf. Francès, *op. cit.*, 91.

<sup>124</sup> Published by S. C. Estopañan, *Bizancio y España. El legado de la basillisa Maria y de los despotas Thomas y Esau de Joannina*, II (Barcelona, 1943); for the date, see *ibid.*, 70. Cf. L. Vranoussis, Τὸ χρονικὸν τῶν Ἰωαννίνων κατ'ἀνέκδοτον δηλώδη ἐπιτομήν, in Ἑπ. Μεσ. Ἀρχ., 12 (1962), 57–115; and *idem*, "Deux historiens byzantins qui n'ont jamais existé: Comnénos et Proclos," *ibid.*, 23–29.

<sup>125</sup> Estopañan, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. X, XI, XXI (the information refers to the late 1360's and the late 1370's). "Monopolion," exercised in this case by Thomas and his friends, is a practice whereby no one may sell specified commodities until the privileged person has sold his store of such commodities: cf. V. Mošin, "Akti iz svetogorskih arhiva," *SpomSAN*, 91 (1939), 166.

under Western occupation. But where origin is specified, Epirus and the Peloponnesus predominate.

In the first half of the fourteenth century there are a few references to Greeks who traded in Dubrovnik or had dealings with the city. A Greek named Stance formed an association with three other people for maritime trade; a man from Arta sold some wine to two Ragusans, while a Greek from Zadar was involved in the grain trade, perhaps with Greece or the Morea. Merchants of the "Romania" are mentioned in connection with a large purchase of wheat made by the commune of Dubrovnik in Thessalonica and Constantinople in 1339. Here, the merchants in question were not necessarily provincial ones; they were from the capital and the second largest city of the Empire, and they were involved along with Genoese merchants in rather large wheat transactions.<sup>126</sup>

In the fifty years from 1350 to 1400, there is only one mention of a Greek involved in trade: Theodoros Angelos of Thessaly participated in the purchase of some wheat for Dubrovnik from a certain Blasius, sebastocrator.<sup>127</sup> This inactivity was probably the result of the extremely unsettled situation, especially in western Greece, after the civil wars, the conquest by Stephen Dušan, and the Albanian invasions of Epirus. On the contrary, the number of Greeks increased in the next sixty years. Some came from the core of the Byzantine Empire; thus, a Theodore Catharo from Thessalonica had various affairs in Dubrovnik in 1424–25. A Greek from Serres bought cloth in Dubrovnik and sent money to Venice for an unknown reason.<sup>128</sup> A man called Ser Michael Tessariti from Constantinople lived in Dubrovnik in 1417 and engaged a servant. His business is not known, but he may have been a merchant.<sup>129</sup> Some of these people conducted long-distance trade. Thus, Manuel Zaliotus from Constantinople, son of Paschal, had a ship with which he brought grain from Sicily to Dubrovnik; in 1436, he made an exchange contract with a Sicilian and undertook to sail to Sicily again. A Greek ship arrived in Dubrovnik in 1407, carrying cloth from Venice. But the majority of the trading ventures of these Greeks spanned rather shorter distances. The merchants traveled from Arta, or from other unnamed parts of Greece, to Dubrovnik. They seem to have been primarily involved in the provisioning of Dubrovnik with wheat, millet, barley, meat, cheese, linen, wine, and other food products.<sup>130</sup> We do not, unfortunately, have any details about their capital or about the ways they used to finance their trade. But they seem, for the most part, to have been rather petty traders, transferring small quantities of merchandise on their boats.

That there is, then, a Byzantine merchant and banker class in the Palaeologan period can hardly be doubted; the Western economic presence did not destroy the Byzantine merchant. But this merchant operated in an economic system which

<sup>126</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 24), nos. 114, 173, 190, and 186.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 251 (1364).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 686, 688, 690, and 729. The man's name was Turnich, or Tornikios Yanitzopoulos. On Serres, see G. Ostrogorsky, "La prise de Serrès par les Turcs," *Byzantion*, 35 (1965), 302–19.

<sup>129</sup> Krekić, *op. cit.*, no. 632.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 888, 891, 893, 895, 905, 533, 667, 728, 1103, 762, 810, 923, 986, 929, 930, 870, 873, 879, 963, 981, and 1219.

was heavily dominated by Italians. The greatest disability of the Byzantines was that they could not participate in the primary forms of international trade, for the Italians controlled the most important prerequisites for this: communications through their fleets, the money markets through their elaborate banking and financial techniques, and the information mechanisms through their system of representatives in all important trade centers. Thus it was that the Byzantines rarely were able to gain access to the Western and Italian markets. Their access to the great ports of the Black Sea was also severely limited. But, although they did not trade much in Caffa or Tana, they were allowed—perhaps encouraged—to invest their money and even to trade in the smaller markets of the Danube delta. Here, the Greeks played a service role to the Italians: they collected the grain, they invested their money, and the end product of their activity was channeled to Pera to be used locally or to be sent to Genoa. The same can be said about the Greek bankers whom we see in Constantinople in the fifteenth century. They had capital, sometimes in rather large sums, but they invested it in a money and commodities market controlled by the Italians. As for the provincial Greek merchant, he, too, could carry out his activities; but he, too, simply participated in an economic system in which he did not have the possibility of taking the initiative or of making important decisions.

The Byzantine merchant could act within relatively narrow geographic limits, and his activities were secondary. He played the role of intermediary for the Italians, and he engaged primarily in retail trade. Significantly, it was these retail activities that Byzantine emperors—or the merchants themselves—tried to safeguard from Italian competition, in Constantinople in the early fourteenth century as in Thessalonica in the early fifteenth.<sup>131</sup> Only once in the period under discussion did the Byzantines try to break out of this constricted situation. This was in the late 1340's, when their ships sailed to the grain markets of the Black Sea and the government began to take measures to protect the merchantmen and its own maritime interests. But the answer to this Byzantine challenge was quick and effective: force, normally unnecessary, was now used, and the Black Sea was, once again, closed to Byzantine traders, except on the sufferance of the Genoese.

As is well known, the undoubted economic predominance of the Italian merchants had a political-legal foundation upon the privileges granted them by Byzantine and other Eastern Mediterranean rulers. In the Byzantine Empire, commercial privileges were given to the Venetians in 1082 and to the Genoese and Pisans later in the Comnenian period. But it was after the recapture of Constantinople in 1261 that these privileges became most extensive.<sup>132</sup> The Venetians and Genoese were freed from the 10 percent import-export tax and from virtually all

<sup>131</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), II, no. 1995. In 1319–20, the Venetians complained that they were not allowed to sell cloth and other things wholesale or retail in Constantinople and that Venetian fishermen and butchers were harassed when they tried to sell their products in the usual places: Thomas, *Diplomatarium* (*supra*, note 35) I, 165.

<sup>132</sup> Apart from Heyd, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), cf. also S. Borsari, "Per la storia del commercio veneziano col mondo bizantino nel XII secolo", *RSI*, 88 (1976), 104–26; *idem*, "Il crisobullo d'Alessio I per Venezia," *Annali dell'Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici*, 2 (Naples, 1970), 111–23; Balard, "Les Génois" (*supra*, note 29), 467–502.

other duties. They received the right to have their own government, their places of residence, their weights and measures, and their own courts, which meant that they could judge commercial cases according to their own laws and not according to the local legal system, often insensitive to economic needs. It is a measure of the power and importance of these privileges that many Byzantines tried to acquire foreign citizenship in order to benefit from them. This phenomenon may be observed among members of the upper class. In 1362, the Emperor John V complained that a certain "Manoli protovestiarius," although a Greek born in Constantinople and living in Mesembria, pretended to be a Venetian *quando traficat in Constantinopoli*.<sup>133</sup> The ambassadors Nicholas Notaras (1377) and Demetrius Cydones (1391) sought and received Venetian citizenship.<sup>134</sup> In 1373, the grand primmikerios Alexius, who had already been granted by John V extensive territories in Thasos, Christopolis, and Anaktoropolis to govern in hereditary fashion, wrote to Venice and requested that he and his sons and heirs be made Venetian citizens and be accepted among the Venetian nobles in the name of the friendship which he professed toward Venice. In January 1374, a decree of Andrea Contarino granted this request and gave Alexius all the privileges of a Venetian citizen: *in Venetum et civem nostrum recepimus atque recipimus, et Venetum et civem nostrum fecimus et facimus, et pro Veneto et cive nostro in Venetijs et extra ubilibet haberi volumus et tractari*. The *et extra* meant that Alexius had the privileges of a Venetian even outside Venice itself, including, presumably, Byzantine territories.<sup>135</sup>

Not only the aristocracy but many other, nameless people sought Venetian or Genoese citizenship. Some were *gasmouloi*, who preferred the citizenship of their Italian parent. There were fishermen, tavern keepers in Constantinople, and many traders who used this expedient in order to avoid paying the Byzantine taxes and duties and presumably also to benefit from all the other privileges enjoyed by the Italian merchant. Various emperors—Andronicus II, John VI, John V—complained bitterly about the acquiescence or indeed encouragement given by Venetian and Genoese officials to such practices, but the complaints do not seem to have had much effect.<sup>136</sup>

The question of Byzantine state policy must also be studied in connection with the economic developments discussed here. It is an important question, for al-

<sup>133</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, II, 82ff.

<sup>134</sup> J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus, 1391-1425* (New Brunswick, 1969), 486-87; R.-J. Loenertz, "Démétrius Cydonès, citoyen de Venise," *EO*, 37 (1938), 125-26.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, II, no. 98, p. 164. Italian protection was sought for goods as well as persons. For example, Georgios Eudaimonoianis, *megas stratopedarches* of Theodore II, Despot of the Morea, deposited his money with the Venetians in Modon and Coron: see Iorga, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 121), III (Paris, 1902), 21-22 (1437).

<sup>136</sup> Thiriet, *Régestes* (*supra*, note 13), I, nos. 237, 342 (1359), and 438 (1369); Thomas, *Diplomatarium* I, 452; II, no. 49; Chrysostomides, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 25), 276-89, and documents nos. 4 and 6. For Andronicus II, see Laiou, *Constantinople* (*supra*, note 19), 260ff., 308-11. In 1362, the Byzantine government complained to Venice that Greek subjects had become Venetian citizens and were consequently released from their fiscal obligations to the Byzantine treasury. These must have been traders, for they were paying a *commercium*; Venice then promised not to make any more Greeks into Venetian citizens: Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, II, no. 49. This clause does not appear in subsequent treaties. There are also statements concerning the reverse process, by which Venetians had been "made Greeks"; at Venice's request, the Byzantine government agreed to treat them no longer as Greeks, but as Venetians: *ibid.*, I, no. 80 (1320); II, no. 135 (1390); Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, no. 12 (1369-70).

though the power of the state diminished progressively throughout this period, we are, nevertheless, still in a precapitalist economy, in which political measures played an important role in economic relations. There is no reason to discuss in detail the provisions of the various agreements which the Palaeologan emperors made with the Italian merchant cities.<sup>137</sup> It is sufficient to place them in perspective. The Byzantine state had allowed the Italians to trade freely throughout the Byzantine Empire; it reduced or abolished the duties and taxes attendant upon commercial activity; it gave the Italians places of residence and the right to have their own weights and measures and their own courts. These privileges were requested for a variety of economic and political reasons and were granted for political expediencies. In themselves they did not create the kind of international market I have described. That was created by other factors connected with the economic and social development of Western Europe and even with conditions in the Far East. But the effect of the privileges was to remove some of the obstacles to the functioning of such a market and therefore to help in its development. Thus, the Byzantine state eliminated to some extent political factors in the economic process and permitted the functioning of institutions necessary to a commercial economy, e.g., commercial courts. This was not, of course, a conscious aim, but it was inherent in the privileges granted. Some of these privileges the Byzantine state later had to extend to particular classes, groups, or individuals from among its own subjects. And despite its virtual abdication of authority, it did not entirely abandon its traditional effort to interfere in economic matters.

The series of agreements made between Byzantine emperors and the Italian cities in the thirteenth to the early fifteenth centuries contained some measures which may be termed traditionalist and which aimed at protecting the urban consumer, the retail trader, and to a smaller extent the producer. The emperors tried particularly to regulate the sale, export, and price of wheat, the most important item of consumption.<sup>138</sup> The regulations took two forms, the first one concerning the sale and export of wheat grown within the Byzantine Empire. In the Venetian-Byzantine treaty of 1260, it was stated that Venice could not export Byzantine wheat when its price at Constantinople rose beyond 50 *hyperpyra* per *centenarium*; this was changed to 100 *hyperpyra* in 1277 and remained at that level throughout the Palaeologan period. At the time these regulations were enacted, they constituted a clear effort to protect the Byzantine consumer at times of great scarcity; if the Italians were allowed to buy and export wheat, they would raise its price further and reduce the amount of wheat available to the Byzantines. This is why, in the treaty of 1310, it was stated that Venetians could not even buy and sell grain if its price rose above 100 *hyperpyra* per *centenarium*; thus, not only the export of wheat, but even trading in it was forbidden to Westerners. Furthermore, there was no provision for the possibility of obtaining imperial permission to export wheat when its price rose to this high level.<sup>139</sup> A similar

<sup>137</sup> Along with Heyd, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 5), *passim*, and Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*; see D. Minne, "A propos des privilèges vénitiens sous les Paléologues," *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg*, 48 (1970), 235-41.

<sup>138</sup> Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, 268 ff.; cf. Pegolotti, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 11), 41-42.

<sup>139</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, I, no. 46.

agreement with Genoa was less precise, stating simply that export of wheat would be allowed only after imperial permission.<sup>140</sup> That this is political interference in price formation and in the functioning of the market is clear. It is also relevant, however, that both Venetians and Genoese did buy and try to export Byzantine wheat at prices above the ceiling.<sup>141</sup> Imperial officials, perhaps people from the imperial domain, as well as various aristocrats were guilty of contravening the treaties and selling wheat at what must have been true famine prices. As a result, the Venetians and the Genoese came to dominate the grain trade of the area, and to some extent—although not constantly or completely—the provisioning of Constantinople.

The second kind of regulation was concerned with the sale within the Byzantine Empire of grain produced outside it. This was primarily Black Sea grain, although that of Asia Minor was also involved. It is characteristic of the creation of a single market that, whereas in the Venetian-Byzantine treaties of 1277 and 1285 Black Sea grain was not an issue, by 1317 it was; I take that to mean that by 1317 imports of wheat from the Black Sea area into the Byzantine Empire had become common. In the earlier treaties, it was simply stated that Black Sea grain could be transported freely through Byzantine territories. In 1319, we find the Byzantines trying to regulate the trade in Black Sea grain. Andronicus II insisted that such grain should not be considered in the same manner as other merchandise whose exchange was free of duties. Venice should not sell Black Sea grain in the Byzantine Empire, except with imperial license and after paying the *commercium*.<sup>142</sup> The Venetians produced long and elaborate arguments about how this contravened the treaties; and the subject is usually treated as merely meaning that the Byzantine emperor was trying to increase his revenues by this measure. However, the policy was more than a mere fiscal exercise, as can be seen from the fact that at about the same time (1317) the same emperor had forbidden the Genoese to sell wheat from the Bulgarian coast to Constantinople.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, in 1320, the Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople complained that Venetians were allowed to sell Black Sea grain only after paying a tax (6 carats per *modium*) and that this so raised the price that "people go to others rather than to Venetians [for grain]." <sup>144</sup> The effort here clearly was to help the Byzantine grain producer, although, since the sale of grain by Byzantines was taxed, the revenues of the fisc would also be increased. This effort failed too, for, in the treaties of 1324–25 when political circumstances dictated a conciliatory attitude, Andronicus II accepted the Venetian position; from then on, Black Sea grain could be sold in the Byzantine Empire, but only outside the official corn market of Constantinople.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>140</sup> G. Bertolotto, "Nuova serie di documenti sulle relazioni di Genova coll'impero bizantino," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 28 (1898), 503. The same policy is subsumed in a decree forbidding the export of legumes from Thessalonica: Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, I, no. 80 (1320), p. 166.

<sup>141</sup> Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, 314–15; Laiou, *Constantinople*, 64–73.

<sup>142</sup> For the treatises of 1277 and 1285, see G. L. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig mit besonderen Beziehungen auf Byzanz und die Levante*, III (Vienna, 1857), 133–49 and 339–53; and Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 44), III, 84–96. For 1319, see Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, I, no. 77, p. 141; cf. Laiou, *Constantinople*, 57–65, 273ff.

<sup>143</sup> Laiou, *Constantinople*, 262–63.

<sup>144</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, I, no. 80, p. 165.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, I, no. 98, p. 201.

About forty years later, John V also tried to raise an issue concerning Black Sea grain; it was limited to a proposal to levy a purchase tax on Greeks buying grain from Venetians and to restrict Venetian sales to a single part of Constantinople. It was thus primarily a fiscal matter.<sup>146</sup>

It seems, then, that until the 1320's the Byzantine government made concerted efforts, on the one hand, to keep the price of grain relatively low by forbidding foreigners to buy Byzantine wheat and, on the other hand, to protect the Byzantine wheat producer by forbidding the import of cheap Black Sea grain. The relatively low prices at which Venice was able to buy grain during Andronicus' reign may indicate a certain abundance of home-grown crops, possibly stimulated by his measures.<sup>147</sup>

During the reign of Andronicus II, the Byzantine state was able for the last time to attempt to function as a regulator of important economic activities in the area. After his death, these attempts were sharply reduced in number and importance, with the exception of John VI's effort to support Byzantine trade and increase port revenues. It may further be observed that Andronicus II was the last emperor who tried to protect from the Italians the activities of Byzantine merchants throughout the Empire, and the last one to be held responsible by Venice and Genoa for infractions of the treaties by imperial officials far removed from Constantinople.<sup>148</sup> After his death, the rapid disintegration of the Byzantine Empire in territorial terms, coupled with the decreased control of imperial territories by the central government, made it impossible for the Byzantine emperors to assume responsibility for their subjects' commercial transactions outside Constantinople or to try to legislate any economic regulations outside the capital. Indeed, this trend began with Andronicus himself. Thus, he extracted from the Monemvasiot merchants a two-percent *ad valorem* duty on transactions in Constantinople and in the cities of Thrace, but everywhere else they were allowed to trade without paying any duty. He did not, presumably, control economic activities outside this sphere.

After the 1320's, the decadent Byzantine state could no longer even pretend to regulate economic life. Its meager legislation tried to protect the interests of wine and grain merchants in the capital, and the interests of the fisc. Thus, John V asked the Venetians to trade their wheat in only one place in Constantinople, presumably so that he could decrease the fraud in terms of his revenues. But the Venetians insisted on selling their grain everywhere, except in the official corn market, and paying no duty.<sup>149</sup> He also tried to persuade the Venetians not to import and sell in Constantinople nonlocal wines for a period of three to five years. His rationale was that the Empire was already very poor, and, since Greek wines would not compete in price with the Venetian imports, the wine industry would be ruined: *vinum de Cotrono, de Turpia, et aliud vinum grossum, quod deffertur illuc, mortificat in tantum vinum quod nascitur in imperio, quod vinum*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, II, no. 49 (1362); and Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, no. 1 (1341).

<sup>147</sup> Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, 315 note 104a and 326.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas, *Diplomatarium*, I, 125 ff.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, II, nos. 53 (1363), 89 (1370); Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, no. 11 (1369).

*ipsum non potest tolerare expensas laborerij vinearum, ex quo, nisi per dominationem vestram de gratia subveniatur dicto imperio, in brevissimo spatio temporis ad nihilum est deductum; quia Greci et omnes alij concurrunt tantum ad vinum de quo est melius forum.* When the Venetians did not agree, John V unilaterally forbade the import of wine into Constantinople, and this so angered the Venetians that they considered removing their merchants from Constantinople, Thessalonica, and the rest of the Empire.<sup>150</sup> The argument then turned on the retail sale of wines in Constantinople, and the number of taverns the Venetians were allowed to keep. This is not particularly interesting, except insofar as it illuminates Byzantine policy with regard to retail traders—a policy intimately bound up with the rights of the fisc. John V tried to forbid the sale by Venetians of all merchandise in retail in Constantinople in 1359. This was, of course, hardly a realistic demand and was not in fact accepted. On the other hand, the Venetians reduced the number of taverns they had in Constantinople, because the sale of duty-free wine there much decreased the imperial revenues. In 1361, Venice, agreeing that the sale of duty-free wine made Greek taverns uncompetitive and reduced imperial revenues, decided to tax its own wine.<sup>151</sup>

The last economic measures taken by a Byzantine emperor (Manuel II) had to do with wine sales by Venetians and had no significance except that of a desperate effort to produce some revenues for the Emperor. By this time, the Byzantine state was in no position to offer anything in economic terms either to the Italians or to its own merchants who had, in fact, deserted it, as the words of Manuel II indicate: “Our revenues from the *commercium*, which had declined to almost nothing because of bad conditions and wars, are totally destroyed and are worth nothing, primarily because the Venetians and the Venetian Jews export the merchandise of our Greeks, Turks, and other subjects as if it were Venetian merchandise, and thus defraud our fisc” (1418).<sup>152</sup>

This sad little statement describes the end of a process: the Byzantine economy had first entered the international market of the Eastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth century when this market was being developed. The Byzantines participated in the economy of exchange. Some made money out of it, but they did not control it; their economic activities were secondary and tied to the dominant Italian merchant capital. Having abdicated most of its right to regulate economic life, the Byzantine state lost control and revenues. And the Byzantine economy of the Palaeologan period, even when the activities of Byzantine merchants were

<sup>150</sup> Thomas, *op. cit.*, II, 84 (1362); Thiriet, *Délibérations* (*supra*, note 5), I, no. 698 (1363), and full text, pp. 323–24; cf. Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, nos. 13, 14; and Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, III, 136–38.

<sup>151</sup> Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, nos. 6 and 7; cf. Thomas, *op. cit.*, I, no. 141 (1344); II, no. 53 (1364); Miklosich and Müller, *op. cit.*, III, 146 (1406) and 137 (1390).

<sup>152</sup> Chrysostomides, *op. cit.*, no. 19: “comerchia que propter males conditiones et guerras ad nichilus sunt reducta in totum destruuntur et nichil valent maxime quia nostri Veneti et subditi Judei mercationes vestrorum Grecorum, Turchorum et subditorum, expediunt pro mercimoniis Venetorum datia et comerclum exinde fraudantur et cetera.” [The pronouns are reversed, since this is a Venetian reply to Manuel, referring (almost verbatim) to his arguments.] The hostilities in 1432 between the Genoese of Pera and John VIII, caused in part by a dispute over the *commercium* of Pera, were a very limited affair, and the Emperor seems to have been pacified by a gift of 1,000 gold coins: Chalcocondyles, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 111), II, 57–62; and P. Schreiner, “Venezianer und Genuesen während der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts in Konstantinopel (1432–1434),” *Studi Veneziani*, 12 (1970), 357 ff.

most numerous, was a no-exit economy: for its structure was one which led to stagnation. One man who saw this clearly was Cardinal Bessarion; living in Rome, a fact of significance, he gave advice for the recovery of the economy and the state: he advocated economic protectionism, with controls of the export of necessities; he advised the import of manufacturing and metallurgical techniques from the West and the exploitation of native resources by the Greeks themselves. But he was writing in 1444 (or 1446), and it was much too late: Byzantium had functioned for so long as a hinterland to the Italian-dominated markets that there was no class to carry out such policies, even if the Ottomans had not been at the gates of Constantinople.

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#### ADDENDUM

Since the article above appeared in its first form (as a paper presented to the New England Medieval Association, in October 1977), and even since it was accepted for publication, the research of other scholars, as well as my own work, has progressed further, uncovering new information or—much more rarely—offering new insights into the phenomena discussed in the article. Some new data, interesting in themselves but not adding much to the arguments developed above, help to elucidate the relations between Venetians and Byzantines in the first half of the fourteenth century: it is now possible to discover and identify more individuals who were in some way involved with the Venetians, either through trade or through financial transactions.<sup>1</sup> Also, the importance of the merchants of Monemvasia could and should have been further elaborated upon in the article; and the existence of three communities of Monemvasiots, in Pegai, Thrace, and Constantinople, all active in trade at least in the fourteenth century, should have been discussed at greater length.<sup>2</sup> However, the general argument would not have been affected by these changes.

With regard to the second half of the fourteenth century, and the very beginning of the fifteenth, two main sources allowed us to discover the existence and draw a collective portrait of the Byzantine merchant class: Genoese notarial sources, and Byzantine patriarchal documents. Here, additional information which has been recently collected or studied does make a difference.

In his meticulous research in the Genoese State Archives, M. Balard discovered a new register of the notary Antonio di Ponzò, which complements the already published register.<sup>3</sup> Here, the presence of Greeks, both from the Byzantine Empire and from the littoral of the Black Sea, is very significant; this register highlights some of their activities which were not so clearly shown in the published source. For one thing, the geographic sphere of their origins is enlarged: there are Greeks not only from Constantinople but also from Aenos and Simisso. The latter are sailors, who are seen to engage in a contract of exchange between Chilia and Simisso.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the vast majority of the Greeks who appear in this

<sup>1</sup> Miklosich-Müller, *Acta*, III, p. 107 (1332), 102–103 (1324); Ch. Verlinden, *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, II (Ghent, 1977), 573; A.S.V., Notai di Candia, b. 11 (notary Antonio Bresciano), fol. 3<sup>r</sup>, and fol. 5<sup>v</sup> (1350). I have prepared an edition of and commentary on the Constantinopolitan acts of this notary.

<sup>2</sup> See G. Bertolotto, "Nuova serie di documenti sulle relazioni di Genova coll'impero bizantino," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 28 (1897), 511–45; Tafel-Thomas, *Urkunden*, III, 180ff; V. Laurent, *Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, fasc. IV, *Les registes de 1208 à 1309*, nos. 1493, 1520.

<sup>3</sup> M. Balard, "Notes sur les ports du Bas-Danube au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Südost. Forschungen*, 38 (1979), 1–12. My own research in the Genoese archives has been greatly helped by the recent publications of M. Balard and those of Gian Giacomo Musso. I should like to thank Professors Musso and Geo Pistarino as well as the Director of the Genoese Archives, Dr. Aldo Agosto, for their kindness and advice. My trips to Genoa were made possible by a generous grant of the Guggenheim Foundation; to that institution I express my gratitude.

<sup>4</sup> A.S.G., Notai Ignoti, b. 18, fols. 43<sup>v</sup>–44<sup>r</sup>, 44<sup>r</sup>–v.

source are owners, part-owners, or captains of ships; and the ships are *ligna de orlo*, or *pamfila*, medium-sized boats which were fairly common in this area.<sup>5</sup> Most of the Greek ships sail to Pera, or to Constantinople, and when their cargo is mentioned, it is almost always grain, as might be expected.<sup>6</sup> It is usually transported to Pera, but occasionally also to Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> The captains or owners of the ships also engage in business on their own account; again, not an unusual situation. The most common transactions documented here are exchange contracts by which sums loaned in *sommi* of silver are payable in gold *hyperpyra* of Pera.<sup>8</sup> One of these *patroni* of boats, Constancius Mamali, whom we have already found engaging in financial transactions with Frangopoulos and Vassilikos, is here seen to buy from a certain Theodore of Caffa, inhabitant of Pera, 60 *modii* of grain; the measure used is the Constantinopolitan *modius*, not the Perote one; probably meaning that the grain was to be transported to Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

The added information gained from this register supports the argument concerning the position of the Greeks in the Black Sea trade in the 1360s: they were very active, especially—though not only—as sailors, but their activities were determined and circumscribed by those of the Genoese.<sup>10</sup> However, an additional point may be usefully made here. It is that the economic activities of the Greeks and the Genoese were so enmeshed that, although their long-term interests were opposed, the actual situation was one of cooperation between them. Thus, it is not infrequent to find boats co-owned by a Greek and a Genoese.<sup>11</sup> In one extraordinary case, the co-owners of a *lignum de orlo*, Theodore Eugenikos (Vighinico) and Jacopo Sparano of Gaeta, fearful of hostile Turks and of Dobrotica, used their Genoese contacts to engineer a fictitious sale of their boat to a Genoese man.<sup>12</sup> The same point (of Greek-Genoese coexistence) is suggested by the fact that there are, in Chilia, at least some Greeks who are settled and live here.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the most controversial argument made in my article above concerns the export of Byzantine wheat in Western Europe. I had originally thought that these exports essentially stopped after the conclusion of the second civil war and the consequent disruption of the Byzantine State and its economy. However, the Genoese archives suggest that exports of wheat from lands either still Byzantine or Byzantine until recently continued in the late fourteenth century, and even into the fifteenth, and that sometimes the grain was transported by Byzantines or on Byzantine ships. This grain is sometimes described as *granum de Romania* and is distinguished from Turkish grain or from grain which was loaded in Caffa, and which therefore came from the areas bordering the northern part of the Black Sea. Indeed, some information relative to the imports of grain to Genoa in December 1388–November 1389, shows that 36 percent of the grain whose provenience is known comes from the “Romania,” and 30 percent from Caffa.<sup>14</sup> Two questions arise here: first, where was this grain of Romania produced, and secondly, who were the people involved in its export and profiting from it? The first question may be partly answered by examining the ports in which grain was loaded for export. Caffa and Pera will not

<sup>5</sup> For example, *ibid.*, fols. 12<sup>r</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>, 30<sup>r</sup>–v. For a description of these ships, see M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise*, II, 558–59.

<sup>6</sup> A.S.G., Notai Ignoti, b. 18, fols. 12<sup>r</sup>–v, 28<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 12<sup>v</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> For example, *ibid.*, fols. 30<sup>r</sup>–v, 31<sup>r</sup>–v, 43<sup>v</sup>–44<sup>r</sup>. In one case, the entire crew and most of the officers of a *lignum de orlo* seem to be Greek; their consent is sought in an agreement made by the owners to transport grain to Constantinople: *ibid.*, fol. 12<sup>v</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 28<sup>r</sup>; cf. Pistarino, *Notai*, nos. 47, 48.

<sup>10</sup> See *supra*, pp. 195–98.

<sup>11</sup> A.S.G., Notai Ignoti, b. 18, fols. 12<sup>v</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>. We also find a man from Spiga who is the *patronus* of a boat. Spiga being a Greek-inhabited suburb of Pera (Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 271), this Janulli de Spiga is probably a Greek.

<sup>12</sup> A.S.G., Notai Ignoti, b. 18, fols. 35<sup>v</sup>–37<sup>v</sup>, 42<sup>r</sup>–v; cf. Balard, “Notes,” *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> A.S.G., Notai Ignoti, b. 18, fols. 9<sup>r</sup>, 3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> G. G. Musso, *Navigazione e commercio genovese con il Levante nei documenti dell'Archivio di Stato di Genova* (Rome, 1975), doc. no. 4 (1384), no. 6 (1390); cf. pp. 144, 150 ff. and his Table A and B. According to information given by M. Balard (*Romanie génoise*, 760), about 70% of the known imports of grain into Genoa in 1384 originated in Caffa or in Romania. Cf. A.S.G., San Giorgio, “Introitus soldorum duorum pro mina grani,” (“Gabella grani”), sala 37, sc. 26 (1384). For a clear distinction between the grain of Caffa and that of Romania, see A.S.G., Archivio Segreto, 3021, no. 56 (1392). Cf. Musso, *Navigazione*, 161. Cf. also A.S.G., Antico Comune, r. 155, c. 67<sup>v</sup> (28 February 1404).

be taken into account, since they were Genoese colonies. The other ports of lading were Constantinople,<sup>15</sup> Mesembrea,<sup>16</sup> Panidos, and "Lo Porro," or "Lo Gollo." "Lo Porro" or "Lo Gollo" must be the port of Porou, in southwestern Thrace.<sup>17</sup> It apparently was used interchangeably with Panidos as a port where the Genoese loaded Romania grain. For a document of 1390 says that 2,000 *modii* of grain had to be consigned "*in loco de lo Porro seu in partibus Pannidi vel alibi in locis Grece ad loca solita navigia honerari videlicet a bucha Avis circa seu in Turchia.*" It will be noted that Selymbria and Panidos formed part of the apanage granted to Andronicus IV and his son John VII by the Emperor John V Palaeologus in 1381. The grant and the succession agreement were guaranteed by the Genoese, who now and until 1399 were in the pleasant situation of having the major Thracian grain markets in the hands of their allies.<sup>18</sup> Porou and Panidos seem to have functioned as grain markets even later, for a document dated November 29, 1408, mentions that 270 *modii* of grain were to be loaded there on a ship bound for Genoa.<sup>19</sup> Even in 1444 we find a Greek of Constantinople selling 50 *modii* "*granorum de Panito,*" to be delivered in Panidos.<sup>20</sup> The ports in question, then, are located along the western littoral of the Black Sea, Constantinople proper, the Sea of Marmara and western Thrace. The conclusion seems to be inescapable that we are dealing with the production of Thrace, which was exported from a number of ports, most of them still in Byzantine hands. While this export was interrupted by the blockade and the lengthy siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans (1394-1402), exports resumed later.<sup>21</sup>

On the second question some light may be shed by the records of the "Massaria" of Caffa, which show that this city, normally a great export center for grain, was forced in 1386, because of a Tatar blockade, to import its supplies. Some of its grain then came from other Black Sea ports. But a not inconsiderable quantity was loaded in Constantinople and Pera. It was brought to Caffa on the *cocha* of Johanes Todischi<sup>22</sup> or in the *navis* of Jane de Monojane. This latter personage is a rather intriguing one. His name suggests that he belonged to the originally Monemvasiot family of Demonoiani or Eudaimonoioannes; although the Monemvasiot origin may have been just a memory by this time. More important, although he was the *patronus* of the ship which carried the wheat to Caffa, the ship itself belonged to the Byzantine Emperor, who in this case functioned as a grain exporter.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the Romania grain imported into Genoa was also carried by ships owned either by Greeks or by Genoese who were closely associated with Greeks. Jane de Draperiis was an important man of affairs in the late fourteenth century. The family of de Draperiis, among the richest in Pera, was connected to the Byzantines. Jane's mother was called Jhera (Kyra) Paleologina, and was the daughter of a Calojane Livadari; she was Greek, rich (having had a dowry of 2500 *hyperpyra*), and perhaps connected to the imperial family, as the name suggests. Her husband Luchino, as well as her son Jane, was involved in the grain trade and in most other important affairs of the colony of Pera; and both had economic connections with the Emperor in 1389 and later.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Musso, *Navigazione*, doc. no. 6; A.S.G., Caffè Massaria, 1386, 362v (grain sent to Caffa); "Gabella grani," 1384, 2r, 3r-v.

<sup>16</sup> Mesembrea: A.S.G., "Gabella grani," 1384, fol. 3r; Selymbria, *ibid.*, fol. 18v, 24r; cf. Musso, *op. cit.*, Table 2.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine Asdracha, *La région des Rhodopes aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles; étude de géographie historique* (Paris, 1976), 43.

<sup>18</sup> Musso, *Navigazione*, doc. no. 5, and p. 49; J. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus, 1391-1425; A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, 1969), 35ff.

<sup>19</sup> A.S.G., Notaio G. Balbi, no. 411.

<sup>20</sup> This information comes from the Genoese notary B. de Ferrariis. I owe it to the kindness of Doctor Ausilia Roccatagliata, who allowed me to see the manuscript of her edition of various 15th-century Genoese notaries of the Levant.

<sup>21</sup> Musso, *Navigazione*, p. 159 and table C (1404); *ibid.*, p. 149 (1404).

<sup>22</sup> A.S.G., Caffè Massaria, 1386, fol. 362v.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 360r, 360v, 414v. On de Monojane, cf. also V. Gjuzelev, "Du commerce génois dans les terres bulgares durant le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Bulgarian Historical Review* (1979), 36-58. The emperor is not named. Since the grain was loaded in Constantinople or Pera, he may have been John V, or John VII.

<sup>24</sup> Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 320 and 342, misreads the name of Palaeologina's father as "Linodari." The Livadarii were a well-known aristocratic family of the Palaeologan period. See A.S.G., Notary Donato di Chiavari, 1389, nos. 21, 24, 10, 81, 17. Cf. A.S.G., Peire Massaria, 1390 bis, fols. 5r, 31v; 1391, 110v, 112r-v, 162r.

Finally, a man called Manuel Cabasilas transported to Genoa a considerable amount of grain, both in 1384 and again in 1389. In 1384 the grain was loaded in Aristo, and several sailors, among them a certain Sofianos, apparently were partners in its sale. But in 1389, Manuel Cabasilas was transporting to Genoa 5421.5 *mine* of imperial grain. He was acting as agent for the Emperor because in the agreement made in Pera with the podestà, he and Luchino de Draperis represented the Emperor. In 1390, still in Genoa, Manuel Cabasilas received in the name of the Emperor 34 Genoese *libre* owed to the Emperor for grain. J. Barker thinks that Cabasilas undertook this trip as the representative of John V, and in order to present the Emperor's complaints to the Genoese; the grain dealings would then have been a subsidiary activity. However, there is no doubt from the documentation used here—which was not available to Barker—that Cabasilas' primary business was the grain trade. Furthermore, I do not think it is ever explicitly stated that the Emperor in question was John V. There is, in fact, nothing to preclude the hypothesis—no more than an hypothesis at this point—that Cabasilas was acting as the representative of Genoa's ally, John VII.<sup>25</sup>

As M. Balard has remarked, other imperial agents had important commercial activities in Pera also. Thus a certain Leondarios, who may be Demetrius Lascaris Leontaris, close associate of Manuel II, was involved in trade and probably bribed two Genoese officials.<sup>26</sup>

Two conclusions emerge from the above. One is that Thrace seems to have exported grain in the late fourteenth century, something one would not have expected. Secondly, the Byzantine aristocracy and the Emperor himself, whether John V or John VII, were involved in trade with the Genoese in this period, including trade in grain.<sup>27</sup> At a time when the grain stockpiled in Constantinople must have been minimal, it is interesting to find the Byzantine upper class participating in its export. The final question: whether the grain thus sold came primarily from imperial estates, that is, whether the Byzantine Emperors commercialized their own production, cannot be answered at this point.

For the late fourteenth century the registers of the "Massaria" of Pera and Caffa provide a great deal of information about the Greek population of those colonies as well as of the towns of the Black Sea coasts. Among the Greeks of Pera we find, as may be expected, artisans of various kinds: caulkers, master millers, master builders, shipbuilders, a baker, a fisherman, a fruit vendor, a butcher, sailors.<sup>28</sup> There are others who serve as intermediaries between the ruling Genoese and the Greek population: these are the tax-collectors for the Greek-inhabited suburbs of Pera, a few notaries who drew up Greek acts, and interpreters.<sup>29</sup> Greeks manned the ships which sailed in the Black Sea: Greeks from Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Simisso, Trebizond, Sinopi, Kerasous, and Todoro<sup>30</sup> sailed as crew on Greek or Genoese ships. Some even reached Genoa, where they made up a considerable proportion of the sailors from the Levant.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On Cabasilas, see Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 758, and the sources he mentions. Cf. in particular "Gabella grani," 1384, 8r, 41v, 58v, 83r, and Antico Comune, Magistrorum rationalium r. 100, fols. 61r-v. Cf. Notai Ignoti C (1389-91), act of October 14, 1390. The first document published by J. Barker ("John VII in Genoa: A Problem in Late Byzantine Source Confusion," *OCP*, 28 [1962], 236-237) in fact forms the sequence to the documents mentioned above. Thus, neither this nor Barker's second document may be used as indications of John VII's voyage to Italy, contrary to Barker's assertion.

<sup>26</sup> A.S.G., Peire Sindicamenta, reg. 1, 1402, fols. 60v-70r; Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 758.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 183-84. A Genoese sea captain planned to load in Caffa 300-400 *modii* of grain "domini Imperatoris Constantinopolitani" (A.S.G., Not. Oneglia Lanfranco, f. 1, no. 148). It is thus clear that the Byzantine Emperor was involved in a fairly substantial grain trade, with the Genoese as important clients.

<sup>28</sup> A.S.G., Peire Massaria, 1390 bis, fols. 59v, 60v, 90r, 2r, 41v, 26v, 30r; 1391, 4r, 54r, 69v, 72r; 1390, 112v, 34v, 37v, 171v, 109v, 153v.

<sup>29</sup> One of the Greek notaries is Jane de Vrana: Peire Massaria, 1390 bis, 48r, 186v. One of the tax collectors is Andrea Vasilico: Peire Massaria, 1390, 38v, and Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 402. On Greek notaries and interpreters, cf. also A.S.G., Notary Donato di Chiavari, 1389, no. 23.

<sup>30</sup> A. Agosto, "Due lettere inedite sugli eventi del Cembalo e di Sorcati in Crimea nel 1434," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, n.s., 17 (1978), 509-17.

<sup>31</sup> Peire Massaria, 1390, 112v; Caffa Massaria, 1386, 623r, 624r, 625r, 626r, 627v, 628v-629r, 360v, 364v; 1410, 19r; Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 881; Musso, *Navigazione*, 188-93. A.S.G., "Gabella grani," 1384, 10r. Byzantine sailors from other areas were also active. In 1403, Manuel Calogeniti of Ainos arrived in Crete on his *griparia*: he had been to Thessalonica before sailing from Ainos: N. Iorga, "Documents concernant les Grecs et les affaires d'Orient tirés des registres de notaires de Crète," *RHSEE*, 14 (1937), 90.

Several Greeks stand out from the rest of the population. A certain Andreas Vassilikos, collector of a tax paid by the inhabitants of Lagirio, is remarkable simply because of his name; we know that a number of Greeks of that name had trade or financial connections with westerners.<sup>32</sup> Manoli Frangalexi, a banker, seems to have done a good deal of business with the Genoese of Pera.<sup>33</sup> And both M. Balard and G. G. Musso have pointed out that Nicolas Notaras, the father of Lucas, made a fortune from the Genoese public debt, and had financial relations with the Genoese aristocracy.<sup>34</sup> Just as interesting is Ioannes Goudelis, whose career can be followed in both Byzantine and Genoese documents.

Ioannes was the son of a George Goudelis, who in 1400 is seen to have disposed of considerable funds: he invested 2,600 *hyperpyra* in a trading venture, made a loan guaranteed in the most formal manner, and bought land as well.<sup>35</sup> Ioannes, like his father, made his money work in various ways; he invested in real estate and traded in the Aegean, accepting capital for investment.<sup>36</sup> While these activities of the family are known from the Greek sources, the Genoese archives shed a new and interesting light on the Goudelis. George possibly and Ioannes certainly were closely connected with the Genoese. Ioannes, or Callojane, was, some point, *dominus et patronus* of a large ship (*navis duarum copertarum*) in which he sailed from Pera to Chios. He had important friends among the Genoese. Indeed, when in 1402 an inquiry was made into the activities of Genoese high officials of the colony of Pera, Goudelis was asked to testify on a charge of having bribed the treasurers in order to receive preferential treatment for his ship.<sup>37</sup> From the same source we learn also that Goudelis traded in grain; a trip to "the southern parts" in 1401 was to Chios, where he loaded grain which he brought to Constantinople, then under Ottoman siege, and sold at the exorbitant famine price of 30.5–31 *hyperpyra* per *modium*. The Genoese officials were accused of having illegally participated in this grain sale. His Genoese partner was Lodisio de Draperiis, of the great Perote family.<sup>38</sup> In sum, this Greek aristocrat not only engaged extensively in trade, but did so with the help of the Genoese. He traded in grain and in wine.<sup>39</sup> He was fairly ruthless in his financial dealings, as was his father; witness his taking advantage of a famine to make money for himself and for his Genoese contacts.

The story of Goudelis illustrates some points that deserve to be emphasized here. For one thing, when the Greek and Italian sources are seen together, they provide a vivid picture of Greek traders and financiers who were in close connection with each other and with the Genoese. Thus, Jane de Monojane, who had his testament drawn up in Tana, in Greek, by a Greek priest, named as his executors three Greeks: among them were Michael de Monojane and Nicola Coresi, the latter of Chios, but both of them inhabitants and citizens of Constantinople.<sup>40</sup> Nicola Coresi is not unknown; he was the father of Manuel Koresis, traveling partner in at least two partnerships with George Goudelis.<sup>41</sup> The latter—Byzantine aristocrat, member of the Senate, *oikeios* of the Emperor, and investor—was one of two imperial representatives who were originally to recover money owed to the Emperor for a grain sale, money which was subsequently recovered by Cabasilas. Both Goudelis and Nicolas Notaras are qualified as "Januenses" by a Genoese notary in 1390.<sup>42</sup> All of them had almost daily contacts with various members of the

<sup>32</sup> Peire Massaria, 1390, 5r, 9v, 38v; 1391, 6r, 14r, 39r, 38r; 1390 bis, 77r; 1391, 77r; cf. *supra*, pp. 197, 204. The name Sofiano is also interesting for the same reason: Peire Massaria, 1390, 218r. An Ioannes Vassilico was among the Greeks who appeared in the register of a Genoese notary in 1453: A. Roccatagliata, "Con un notaio genovese tra Pera e Chio nel 1453–1454," *RESEE*, 17 (1979), 220.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Peire Massaria, 1402, 54r, 119v, 78v, 208v; 1391, 69v, 68r, 99v, 155r–v.

<sup>34</sup> Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 347–49; Musso, *Navigazione*, 162, 243–45.

<sup>35</sup> Miklosich-Müller, *Acta*, II, 361–66, 400, 546; cf. *supra*, pp. 199–200. On the Goudelis, cf. Barker, "John VII," 229–30.

<sup>36</sup> Miklosich-Müller, *Acta*, II, 388, 511–12, 550–51; cf. *supra*, p. 201.

<sup>37</sup> A.S.G., *Sindicamenta Peire*, 1402, reg. 1, 107r, 106r, 45r–v, 51v–52v, 71r, 95r–111v. Cf. Balard, *Romanie génoise*, 758.

<sup>38</sup> A.S.G., *Sindicamenta Peire*, reg. 1, 1402, 52r.

<sup>39</sup> Peire Massaria, 1390 bis, 5r, 31v. There is a Godeli who was one of two Turkish ambassadors to Pera in September 1390: Peire Massaria, 1390 bis, 31v. It is not clear if this is the same person.

<sup>40</sup> A.S.G., *Notary Donato di Chiavari*, 1389, nos. 37–38 (February 1390–91). The executors authorized a Genoese of Pera to recover de Monojane's property in Tana.

<sup>41</sup> *Supra*, pp. 199–200.

<sup>42</sup> Barker, "John VII," 236. Goudelis, like Nicolas Sofianos, Leondaris and Nicolas Notaras, were members of the Senate in 1409: V. Laurent, "Le trisépiscopat du Patriarche Matthieu 1er," *REB*, 30 (1972), 134; Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires*.

de Draperiis family, some of whom bought considerable amounts of grain in ports controlled by John VII. The Genoese political party in Constantinople, whose representatives were Andronicus IV and John VII, rested on a solid economic foundation.

The other point which the Goudelis story illustrates and which should be stressed is the wealth and success which some members of this group enjoyed. It is, therefore, essential to distinguish between the political collapse of the Byzantine State and the wealth of some of its subjects.<sup>43</sup> In 1453, after Constantinople had fallen to the Ottomans, many Genoese merchants or petty traders left the city to go to Chios; among them were Greeks who, by definition, had been closely connected with the Genoese of Pera; some of these, too, were merchants.<sup>44</sup> But there must have been those who remained in Constantinople, or who returned soon after its fall, for in 1476 a group of obviously very rich Greeks competed unsuccessfully for the right to collect certain taxes for the Ottoman government; three of the four in the group bore famous names: there were two Palaeologi and a Chalkokondyles.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> A much stronger but similar argument, distinguishing between political and economic dominance, has been made for the Black Sea area by E. S. Zevakin, M. L. Pencko, "Ricerche sulla storia delle colonie genovesi nel Caucaso occidentale nei secoli XIII–XV," trans. by M. T. Dellacasa in *Miscellanea di Studi Storici*, I (Genoa, 1969), 95.

<sup>44</sup> A. Roccatagliata, "Con un notaio genovese," 224, 225–26, 229.

<sup>45</sup> I thank Professor Hahı Inalcık for directing my attention to his "Notes on N. Beldiceanu's Translation of the Kanunname, fonds turc ancien 39, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris," *Der Islam*, 43 (1967), 153–55.